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"PAUL'S LETTERS TO HIS KINSFOLK."

PART I.

BELGIUM——WATERLOO.

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THIS Volume, published under the title of "PAUL'S LETTERS TO HIS KINSFOLK," consists of private letters written by Sir Walter Scott to members of his family, during a tour on the Continent in August and September 1815.

EDINBURGH, *June* 1855.

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FRANCE AND BELGIUM.

LETTER I.

PAUL TO HIS SISTER MARGARET.

Introductory—Sea-sickness—The Flemings—Houses —Women—Dress—Cottages.

It is three long weeks since I left the old mansion-house, which, for years before, has not found me absent for three days, and yet no letter has assured its quiet inmates and neighbours whether my curiosity has met its punishment. Methinks I see the evening circle assembled, and anxiously expressing their doubts and fears on account of the adventurous traveller. The Major will talk of the dangers of outposts and free corps, and lament that I could not have marched under the escort of his old messmates of the * * * * regiment. The Laird will

speak scholarly and wisely of the dangers of highway robbery and overturns, in a country where there are neither justices of peace nor turnpikes. The Minister, again, will set up his old bugbears of the Inquisition, and of the Lady who sitteth upon the Seven Hills. Peter, the politician, will have his anxious thoughts on the state of the public spirit in France,—the prevalence of Jacobinical opinions,—the reign of mobs, and of domiciliary visits, —the horrors of the lantern, and of the guillotine. And thou, my dear sister, whose life has been one unwearied course of affectionate interest in the health and happiness of a cross old bachelor brother, what woful anticipations must thy imagination have added to this accumulation of dangers! Broken sleep, bad diet, hard lodging, and damp sheets, have, in your apprehension, already laid me up a patient in the cabaret of some miserable French village, which neither affords James's Powders, nor Daffy's Elixir, nor any of those infallible nostrums which your charity distributes among our village patients, undiscouraged by the obstinacy of those who occasionally die, in despite both of the medicine and physician. It well becomes the object of so much and such varied solicitude, to remove it as speedily as the posts of this distracted country will permit. I anticipate the joy in every countenance when my packet arrives; the pleasure with which each will seize the epistle addressed to himself, and the delight of old James, when, returned from the post-office at * * *, he delivers with an air of triumph the long-expected despatches; and then, smoothing his grey hairs

with one hand, and holding with the other the handle of the door, lingers in the parlour, till he, too, has the reward of his diligence, in learning his master's welfare.

Till these news arrive, I cannot flatter myself that things will go perfectly right at the old chateau; or rather my vanity suggests, that the absence of so principal a person among its inmates and intimates has been a chilling damp upon the harmless pleasures and pursuits of those who have remained behind. I shall be somewhat disappointed, if the Major has displayed alacrity in putting his double-barrel in order for the moors; or if the Laird has shown his usual solicitude for a seasonable sprinkling of rain to refresh the turnip-field. Peter's speculations on politics, and his walks to the bowling-green, have been darkened, doubtless, and saddened, by the uncertainty of my fate; and I even suspect the Parson has spared his flock one *Seventhly* of his text in his anxiety upon my account.

For you, my dear Margaret, can I doubt the interest you have given me in your affections, from the earliest period of recollection, when we pulled *gowans* together upon the green, until the moment when my travelling-trunk, packed by your indefatigable exertions, stood ready to be locked, but, ere the key could be turned, reversing the frolics of the enchanted chest of the Merchant Abudah, sprung once more open, as if in derision of your labours? To you, therefore, in all justice, belong the first fruits of my correspondence; and while I dwell upon topics personal to myself, and therefore

most interesting to you, do not let our kind friends believe that I have forgotten my promise, to send each of them, from foreign parts, that species of information with which each is most gratified. No! the Major shall hear of more and bloodier battles than ever were detailed to Young Norval by his tutor the Hermit. The Laird shall know all I can tell him on the general state of the country. Peter shall be refreshed with politics, and the Minister with polemics; that is, if I can find any thing of the latter description worth sending; for if ever there existed a country without a sense of religion of any kind, it is that of France. The churches indeed remain, but the worship to which they are dedicated has as little effect upon the minds of the people, as that of the heathen Pantheon on the inhabitants of modern Rome. I must take Ovid's maxim, "*Tamen excute nullum;*" and endeavour to describe the effects which the absence of this salutary restraint upon our corrupt and selfish passions, of this light, which extends our views beyond the bounds of a transitory world, has produced upon this unhappy country. More of this, however, hereafter. My first letter is addressed to you, my dear sister, and must therefore be personal.

Even your partiality would be little interested in my journey through England, or the circumstances attending my embarkation. And of my passage, it is enough to say, that sea-sick I was even unto the uttermost. All your fifteen infallible recipes proved unavailing. I could not brook the sight of lavender-drops; gingerbread nuts were detestable to my eyes, and are so to my recollection

even at this moment. I could as soon have swallowed the horns of the Arch-fiend himself as the dose of hartshorn; and for the great goblet of sea-water, "too much of water had I, poor Ophelia." In short, he that would see as much misery, and as much selfishness, as can well be concentrated, without any permanent evil being either done or suffered, I invite him to hire a berth aboard a packet. Delicacy is lost; sympathy is no more; the bands of love and friendship are broken; one class of passengers eat and drink joyously, though intermingled with another who are expressing their inward grievances in a manner, which, in any other situation, seldom fails to excite irresistible sympathy. The captain and the mate, comforters by profession, indeed exhort you from time to time, to be of good cheer, and recommend a glass of grog, or possibly a pipe of tobacco, or it may be a morsel of fat bacon, to allay the internal commotion; but it is unnecessary to say how ill the remedies apply to the disorder. In short, if you are sick, sick you must be; and can have little better comfort than in reflecting that the evil must be of short duration, though, were you to judge from your immediate feelings, you might conceive your life was likely to end first. As I neither met with a storm nor sea-fight, I do not know what effect they might produce upon a sea-sick patient; but such is the complete annihilation of energy; such the headach, the nausea, and depression of spirits, that I think any stimulus, short of the risk of being shot or drowned, would fail of rousing him to any exertion. The best is, that arrival on the

land proves a certain remedy for the sorrows of the sea; and I do not think that even your *materia medica* could supply any other.

Suppose your brother then landed among the mynheers and yafrows of Holland and Belgium, as it is now the fashion to call what, before our portentous times, was usually named Flanders. Strange sights meet his eyes; strange voices sound in his ears; and yet, by a number of whimsical associations, he is eternally brought back to the land of his nativity. The Flemings, in particular, resemble the Scotch in the cast of their features, the sound of their language, and, apparently, in their habits of living, and of patient industry. They are, to be sure, a century at least behind in *costume* and manners; but the old chateau, consisting of two or three narrow houses, joined together by the gables, with a slender round turret ascending in the centre of the building, for the purpose of containing the staircase, is completely in the old style of Scottish dwelling-houses. Then the avenue, and the acre or two of ground, planted with fruit-trees in straight lines; the garden, with high hedges, clipped by the gardener's art into verdant walls; the intermixture of statues and vases; the fountains and artificial pieces of water, may still be seen in some of our ancient mansions; and, to my indifferent taste, are no unnatural decorations in the immediate vicinity of a dwelling-place, and infinitely superior to the meagreness of bare turf and gravel. At least they seem peculiarly appropriate to so flat a country as Belgium, which boasting no objects of natural beauty or grandeur

and being deprived, in a great measure, even of the grace of living streams of water, must necessarily supply these deficiencies by the exertions of art. Nor does their taste appear to have changed since the days of William III. There seem to be few new houses built; and the old chateaux, and grounds around them, are maintained in the original style in which they were constructed. Indeed, an appearance of antiquity is one of the most distinguishing features which strike the traveller in the Low Countries. Dates, as far back as the fifteenth, and even fourteenth centuries, are inscribed upon the front of many of the houses, both in the country and in the towns and villages. And although I offended your national pride, my dear sister, when I happened to observe, that the Scotch, who are supposed to boast more than other nations of their ancient descent, in reality know less of their early history than any other people in Europe, yet, I think, you will allow, that our borough towns afford few visible monuments of the high claims we set up to early civilisation.

Our neighbours, the English, are not much more fortunate in this respect, unless we take into the account the fortresses built for the purpose of defence on the frontiers of Wales and Scotland, or their ancient and beautiful churches. But we look in vain for antiquity in the houses of the middling ranks; for the mansions of the country gentlemen, and the opulent burghers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, have, generally speaking, long since given place to the architecture of the earlier part of the last age, or the more fantastic structures

of our own day. It is in the streets of Antwerp and Brussels, that the eye still rests upon the forms of architecture which appear in the pictures of the Flemish school; those fronts, richly decorated with various ornaments, and terminating in roofs, the slope of which is concealed from the eye by windows and gables still more highly ornamented; the whole comprising a general effect, which, from its grandeur and intricacy, amuses at once, and delights the spectator. In fact, this rich intermixture of towers, and battlements, and projecting windows, highly sculptured, joined to the height of the houses, and the variety of ornament upon their fronts, produces an effect as superior to those of the tame uniformity of a modern street, as the casque of the warrior exhibits over the slouched broad-brimmed beaver of a Quaker. I insist the more on this, for the benefit of those of the fireside at * * * *, who are accustomed to take their ideas of a fine street from Portland Place, or from the George Street of Edinburgh, where a long and uniform breadth of causeway extends between two rows of ordinary houses of three stories, whose appearance is rendered mean, by the disproportioned space which divides them, and tame, from their unadorned uniformity.

If you talk, indeed, of comforts, I have no doubt that the internal arrangement of the last-named ranges of dwellings is infinitely superior to those of the ancient Flemings, where the windows are frequently high, narrow, and dark; where the rooms open into each other in such a manner as seems to render privacy impossible; where you

sometimes pass into magnificent saloons, through the meanest and darkest of all possible entrances; and where a splendid corridor conducts you, upon other occasions, to a room scarce worthy of being occupied as a pig-sty,—by such pigs at least, whose limbs are bred in England. It is for the exterior alone that I claim the praise of dignity and romantic character; and I cannot but think, that, without in the least neglecting the interior division necessary for domestic comfort, some of these beauties might, with great advantage, be adopted from the earlier school of architecture. That of the present day seems to me too much to resemble the pinched and pared foot of the ambitious Princess, who submitted to such severe discipline, in order to force her toes into the memorable glass slipper.

These marks of ancient wealth, and burgher-like opulence, do indeed greatly excel what could be expected from the architecture of Scotland at the same period. But yet, to return to the point from which I set out, there is something in the height of the houses, and the mode of turning their gables toward the street, which involuntarily reminds me of what the principal street of our northern capital was when I first recollect it.

If you enter one of these mansions, the likeness is far from disappearing. The owner, if a man of family, will meet you with his scraggy neck rising in shrivelled longitude out of the folds of a thinly-plaited stock. The cut of his coat, of his waistcoat, his well-preserved cocked-hat, his periwig, and camblet riding-coat, his mode of salutation, the kiss bestowed on each side of the face, all remind you

of the dress and manners of the old Scotch laird. The women are not, I think, so handsome as my fair countrywomen, or my walks and visits were unfortunate in the specimens they presented of female beauty; but, then, you have the old dress, with the screen, or mantle, hanging over the head, and falling down upon each shoulder, which was formerly peculiar to Scotland. The colour of this mantle is indeed different—in Scotland it was usually tartan, and in Flanders it is uniformly black. The inhabitants say they derive the use of it from the Spaniards, of whose dominions their country was so long a principal part. The dress and features of the lower class bear also a close resemblance to those of Scotland, and favour the idea held by most antiquaries, that the lowlanders, at least, are a kindred tribe. The constant intercourse our ancestors maintained with Flanders, from which, according to contemporary accounts, they derived almost every article which required the least skill in manufacture, must have added greatly to those points of original similarity.

The Flemings are said to be inferior to their neighbours of Holland in the article of scrupulous attention to cleanliness. But their cottages are neat and comfortable, compared to those of our country; and the garden and orchard, which usually surround them, give them an air of ease and snugness, far preferable to the raw and uninviting appearance of a Scotch cottage, with its fractured windows stuffed with old hats and pieces of tattered garments, and its door beset on one side by a dunghill, on the other by a heap of coals, or peats

These statistics, my dear Margaret, rather fall in the Laird's province than yours. But your departments border closely upon each other; for those facts, in which he is interested as a Seigneur de Village, affect you as a Lady Bountiful, and so the state of the cottages is a common topic, upon which either may be addressed with propriety.

Adieu! I say nothing of the pad nag and poor old Shock, because I am certain that whatever belongs peculiarly to Paul will be the object of special care during his absence. But I recommend to you to take some of the good advice which you lavish upon others; to remember that there are damps in Scotland as well as in Holland, and that colds and slow fevers may be caught by late evening walks in our own favoured climate, as well as in France or Belgium. Paul ever remains your affectionate Brother.

LETTER II.

PAUL TO HIS COUSIN THE MAJOR.

Bergen-op-Zoom—British Attack—General Skerret—Night Scene.

AFTER all the high ideas, my dear Major, which your frequent and minute and reiterated details had given me, concerning the celebrated fortress of Bergen-op-Zoom, in former years the scene of your martial exploits, I must own its exterior has sadly disappointed me. I am well enough accustomed, as you know, to read the terms of modern fortification in the Gazette, and to hear them in the interesting narratives of your military experience; and I must own, that bastions and ravelins, half-moons, curtains, and palisades, have hitherto sounded in my ears every whit as grand and poetical as donjons and barbicans and portcullises, and other terms of ancient warfare. But I question much if I shall hereafter be able to think of them with exactly the same degree of respect.

A short reflection upon the principles of modern defence, and upon the means which it employs, might, no doubt, have saved me from the disappointment which I experienced. But I was not, as it happened, prepared to expect, that the strongest fortress in the Netherlands, or, for aught I know,

in the world, the masterpiece of Cohorn, that prince of engineers, should, upon the first approach of a stranger, prove so utterly devoid of any thing striking or imposing in its aspect. Campbell is, I think, the only English poet who has ventured upon the appropriate terms of modern fortification, and you will not be surprised that I recollect the lines of a favourite author,—

> ——————————— "the tower
> That, like a giant standard-bearer, frown'd
> Defiance on the roving Indian power.
> Beneath, each bold and promontory mound,
> With embrasure emboss'd and armour crown'd,
> And arrowy frize, and wedged ravelin,
> Wove like a diadem its tracery round
> The lofty summit of that mountain green." [1]

But, in order to give dignity to his arrowy frize and ravelin, the Bard has placed his works on the edge of a steepy ascent. Bergen-op-Zoom is nothing less. Through a country as level as the surface of a lake, you jolt onward in your cabriolet, passing along a paved causeway, which, as if an inundation were apprehended, is raised upon a mound considerably higher than the champaign district which it traverses. At length, you spy the top of a poor-looking spire or two, not rising proudly preeminent from a group of buildings, but exhibiting their slender and mean pinnacles above the surrounding glacis, as if they belonged to a subterranean city, or indicated the former situation of one which had been levelled with the ground. The truth is, that the buildings of the town, being

[1] [Gertrude of Wyoming, p. iii., st. 25.]

sunk to a considerable depth beneath the sloping ramparts by which it is surrounded and protected, are completely hidden, and the defences themselves, to an inexperienced eye, present nothing but huge sloping banks of earth, cut into fanciful shapes and angles, and carefully faced with green turf. Yet the arrangement of these simple barriers, with reference to the command of each other, as well as of the neighbouring country, has been held, and I doubt not justly, the very perfection of military science. And, upon a nearer approach, even the picturesque traveller finds some gratification. This is chiefly experienced upon his entrance into the town. Here, turning at a short angle into a deep and narrow avenue, running through these mounds, which at a distance seemed so pacific and unimportant, he finds himself still excluded by drawbridges and ditches, while guns, placed upon the adjoining batteries, seem ready to sweep the ground which he traverses. Still moving forward, he rolls over drawbridges, whose planks clatter under the feet of his horses, and through vaulted arches, which resound to the eternal smack of his driver's whip. He is questioned by whiskered sentinels, his passports carefully examined, and his name recorded in the orderly-book; and it is only after these precautions that a stranger, though as unwarlike as myself, is permitted to enter the town. The impression is a childish one; yet a Briton feels some degree of unpleasant restraint, not only at undergoing a scrutiny, to which he is so little accustomed, but even from the consciousness of entering a place guarded with such scrupulous

minuteness. It is needless to tell you, my dear Major, how much this is a matter of general routine in fortified places on the continent, and how soon the traveller becomes used to it as a matter of course. But I conclude you would desire to have some account of my first impressions upon such an occasion. To you, who speak as familiarly of roaring cannon

As maids of fifteen do of puppy-dogs,

my expectations, my disappointment, and my further sensations, will probably appear ridiculous enough.

These formidable fortifications will soon be of little consequence, and may probably be permitted to go to decay. Bergen-op-Zoom, a frontier town of the last importance, while the Princes of Orange were only Stadtholders of the Seven United Provinces, is a central part of their dominions, since the Netherlands have been united into a single kingdom. Meantime, the town is garrisoned by a body of Land-poliz, which corresponds nearly to our local militia in the mode in which it is levied. All the disposable forces of the Netherlands have been sent forward into France, and more are still organizing to be despatched in the same direction.

In the evening, by permission of the commandant, I walked round the scene of your former exploits. But you must forgive me if my attention was chiefly occupied by the more recent assault under our brave countryman, Lord Lynedoch,[1] which

[1] [General Sir Thomas Grahame of Balgowan, in Perthshire, created Baron Lynedoch in 1814. See the Vision of Don

was so boldly undertaken, and so strangely disappointed, when success seemed almost certain. I was accompanied in my walk by a sensible native of the place, a man of Scotch descent, who spoke good English. He pretended to point out with accuracy the points on which the various assaults were made, and the spots where several of the gallant leaders fell. I cannot rest implicit faith in his narrative, because I know, and you know still better, how difficult it is to procure a just and minute account of such an enterprise, even from those who have been personally engaged in it, and how imperfect, consequently, must be the information derived from one who himself had it at second-hand. Some circumstances, however, may be safely taken upon my guide's averment, because they are such as must have consisted with his own knowledge But, first, it may be observed in general, that the history of war contains no example of a bolder attempt; and, if it failed of success, that failure only occurred after almost all the difficulties which could have been foreseen had been encountered and surmounted. In fact, the assailants, successful upon various points, were already in possession of by far the greater number of the bastions; and had they fortunately been in communication with each other, so as to have taken uniform measures for attacking the French in the town they must have become masters of the place. It is even confidently said, that the French commandant sent his aid-de-camp to propose a capitulation; but the officer being

Roderick (Sir W. Scott's Poetical Works, vol. ix.,) and notes.]

killed in the confusion, other and more favourable intelligence induced the Frenchman to alter his purpose. It has been generally alleged, that some disorder was caused by the soldiers, who had entered the town, finding access to the wine-houses. My conductor obstinately denied this breach of discipline. He said, that one of the attacking columns destined to cross the stream which forms the harbour, had unhappily attempted it before the tide had ebbed, and were obliged to wade through when it was of considerable depth; and he allowed, that the severity of the cold, joined to the wetting, might give them the appearance of intoxication. But when the prisoners were put under his charge in the church, of which he was sexton, he declared solemnly, that he did not see among them one individual who seemed affected by liquor. Perhaps his own predilections, or a natural desire to please his auditors, may have influenced his opinion. To resist such temptations to excess is not among the numerous excellences of the British soldier.

The fate of a Dutch officer in our service, who led the attack upon one of the bastions, was particularly interesting. He was a native of the town, and it was supposed had been useful in furnishing hints for the attack. He led on his party with the utmost gallantry; and although the greater number of them fled, or fell, under a heavy fire—for the enemy were by this time upon the alert—he descended into the main ditch, crossed it upon the ice, and forced his way, followed by a handful of men, as far as the internal defences of the place. He had already mounted the inner glacis, when he

was wounded in many places, and precipitated into the ditch; and, as his followers were unable to bring him off, he remained on the ice until next morning, when, being still alive, he became a prisoner to the French. Their first purpose was to execute him as a traitor, from which they were with difficulty diverted by a letter from the British general, accompanied by documents to establish how long he had been in the English service. The unfortunate gentleman was then permitted to retire from the hospital to his own house in the town, where he did not long survive the wounds he had received.[1]

I did not, you may believe, fail to visit the unfortunate spot, where Skerret, so celebrated for his gallantry in the Peninsula Gore, Mercer, Carleton, Macdonald, and other officers of rank and distinction, fell upon this unfortunate occasion.[2] I was assured that General Skerret, after receiving a severe wound by which he was disabled, gave his watch and purse to a French soldier, requesting to be carried to the hospital; and that the ruffian dragged him down from the banquette only to pierce him with his bayonet. But I have since learned, from better authority, that this gallant officer fell on the spot.

[1] I have since been informed, from unquestionable authority, that this officer was not ill-treated by the French. It is remarkable, that he had personally ventured into the town to ascertain the possibility of success, the day before the attack was made.

[2] [See Gazette of General Sir Thomas Grahame's despatches, dated Calmhout, 10th March, 1814. &c., in the *Edinburgh Annual Register* of that year, Appendix, p. cciii., &c.]

While I listened to the details of this unhappy affair, and walked slowly and sadly with my conductor from one bastion to another, admiring the strength of the defences which British valour had so nearly surmounted, and mourning over the evil fate which rendered that valour fruitless, the hour of the evening, gradually sinking from twilight into darkness, suited well with the melancholy subject of my enquiries. Broad flashes of lambent lightning illuminated, from time to time, the bastions which we traversed; and the figure of my companion, a tall, thin, elderly man, of a grave and interesting appearance, and who seemed, from his voice and manner, deeply impressed by recollections of the melancholy events which he detailed, was such as might appear to characterise their historian. A few broad and heavy drops of rain occasionally fell and ceased. And to aid the general effect, we heard from below the hollow roll of the drums announcing the setting of the watch, and the deep and sullen WER DA of the sentinels, as they challenged those who passed their station. I assure you this is no piece of imaginary scenery got up to adorn my letter, but the literal circumstances of my perambulation around the ramparts of Bergen-op-Zoom.

I presume you are now in active preparation for the moors, where I wish you much sport. Do not fail to preserve for me my due share in your friendship, notwithstanding that, on the subject of Bergen-op-Zoom, I am now qualified to give you story for story Such are the advantages which travellers gain over their friends. My next letter

to you shall contain more interesting, as well as more recent and more triumphant, military details.

I must not omit to mention that, in the Church of Bergen-op-Zoom, a tablet of marble, erected by their brother officers, records the names of the brave men who fell in the valorous, but ill-fated attack upon this famous fortress. For them, as for their predecessors who fell at Fontenoy, the imagination of the Briton will long body forth the emblematic forms of Honour and Freedom weeping by their monuments. Once more, farewell, and remember me.

LETTER III.

PAUL TO HIS COUSIN PETER.

Retrospect—Surrender of Paris—Bourbons Restored—Emigrants—Noblesse—Clergy—Liberalists.

THY politics, my dear Peter, are of the right Scottish cast. Thou knowest our old proverbial character of being *wise behind the hand.* After all, the wisdom which is rather deduced from events than formed upon predictions, is best calculated for a country politician, and smacks of the prudence as well as of the aforesaid proverbial attribute of our national character. Yet, believe me, that though a more strict seclusion of the dethroned Emperor of France might have prevented his debarkment at Cannes, and although we and our allies might have spared the perilous farce of leaving him a globe and sceptre to play withal, there were, within France itself, elements sufficiently jarring to produce, sooner or later, a dreadful explosion. You daily politicians are so little in the practice of recollecting last year's news, that I may be excused recalling some leading facts to your recollection, which will serve as a text to my future lucubrations.

The first surrender of Paris had been preceded by so much doubt, and by so many difficulties, that

the final victory seems to have been a matter not only of exultation, but even of surprise, to the victors themselves. This great event was regarded, rather as a gratification of the most romantic and extravagant expectations, than as a natural consequence of that course of reaction, the ebb of which brought the allies to the gates of Paris, as its tide had carried Bonaparte to those of Berlin and Vienna. Pleased and happy with themselves, and dazzled with the glory of their own exploit, the victors were in no humour to impose harsh conditions upon the vanquished; and the French, on their part, were delighted at their easy escape from the horrors of war, internal and external, of siege, pillage, and contribution. Bonaparte's government had of late become odious to the bulk of the people, by the pressure of taxation, by the recurring terrors of the proscription, but, above all, by the repeated disasters which the nation had latterly sustained. The constitutional charter, under which the Bourbon family were restored, was not only a valuable gift to those who really desired to be ensured against the re-establishment of despotism, but operated as a salvo to the wounded feelings of the still more numerous class, who wished that the crimes and calamities of the Revolution should not appear to be altogether thrown away, and who could now appeal to this Bill of Rights, as a proof that the French nation had not sinned and suffered in vain. The laboratory and chemical apparatus which were to have produced universal equality of rights, had indeed exploded about the ears of the philosophical experimentalists, yet they con-

soled themselves with the privileges which had been assured to them by the King upon his restoration.—

> "So though the Chemist his great secret miss,
> For neither it in art or nature is,
> Yet things well worth his toil he gains,
> And doth his charge and labour pay,
> With good unsought, experiments by the way."

All parties being thus disposed to be pleased with themselves, and with each other, the occupation of the capital was considered as the close of the disasters which France had sustained, and converted into a subject of general jubilee, in which the Parisians themselves rejoiced, or affected to rejoice, as loudly as their unbidden guests. But this desirable state of the public mind was soon overcast, and the French, left to their own reflections, began speedily to exhibit symptoms both of division and dissatisfaction.

The first, but not the most formidable of their causes of discontent, arose from the pretensions of the emigrant noblesse and clergy.

At the restoration of Charles II., (to which we almost involuntarily resort as a parallel case,) the nobility and gentry of England, who had espoused the cause of his father, were in a very different condition from the emigrant nobles of France. Many had indeed fallen in battle, and some few by the arbitrary sentence of the usurper's courts of justice; but the majority, although impoverished by fines and sequestrations, still resided upon their patrimonial estates, and exercised over their tenantry and cottagers the rights of proprietors.

Their influence, though circumscribed, was therefore still considerable; and had they been disposed to unite themselves into a party, separate from the other orders of the state, they had power to support the pretensions which they might form. But here the steady sense and candour, not alone of Ormond and Clarendon, but of all the leading Cavaliers, induced them to avoid a line of conduct so tempting yet so perilous. The dangers of reaction, according to the modern phrase, were no sooner sounded into the public ear by the pamphlets and speeches of those who yet clung to a republic, than every purpose, whether of revenge, or of a selfish and separate policy, was disowned in a manifesto, subscribed by the principal Royalists, in which they professed to ascribe their past misfortunes not to any particular class of their fellow-citizens, but to the displeasure of the Almighty, deservedly visiting upon them their own sins and those of the community. Such was the declaration of the Cavaliers at that important crisis; and though there were not wanting *royalistes purs et par excellence*, who, like Swift's correspondent, Sir Charles Wogan,[1] censured the conduct of Clarendon for suffering to escape so admirable an opportunity to establish despotic authority in the crown, and vest feudal power in the nobility, I need not waste words in vindicating his moderate and accommodating measures to my discerning friend Peter.

The scattered remnants of the French noblesse, who survived to hail the restoration of the Bour-

[1] [See Sir Walter Scott's edition of *Swift's Works*, vol. xvii.]

bons, while they possessed no efficient power, held much more lofty pretensions than had been preferred by the aristocracy of Britain at the Restoration. It would be unjust to subscribe to the severe allegation, that they had forgot nothing, and learned nothing, during their long exile; yet it can hardly be either doubted or wondered at, that they retained their prejudices and claims as a separate and privileged class, distinguished alike by loyalty and sufferings in the cause of the exiled family, to a point inconsistent with the more liberal ideas of a community of rights, which, in despite both of the frenzy of the Revolution and the tyranny of Bonaparte, had gradually gained ground among the people at large. And, while the once-privileged classes maintained such pretensions, they were utterly devoid of the means of effectually asserting them. Long years of banishment had broken off their connexion with the soil of France, and their influence over those by whom it is cultivated. They were even divided among themselves into various classes; and the original emigrants, whose object it was to restore the royal authority by the sword, looked with dislike and aversion upon the various classes of exiles of a later date, whom each successive wave of the Revolution had swept from their native land. Their own list did not appear to exhibit any remarkable degree of talent; those among them whose exile was contemporary with their manhood, were now too old for public business, and those who were younger, had become, during their long residence abroad, strangers, in a manner, to the customs and habits of their coun-

try; while neither the aged nor the young had the benefit of practical experience in public affairs. It was not among such a party, however distinguished by birth, by loyalty, by devotion in the royal cause, that Louis XVIII. could find, or hope to find, the members of a useful, active, and popular administration. Their ranks contained many well qualified to be the grace and ornament of a court; but few, it would seem, fitted for the support and defence of a throne. Yet who can wonder, that the men who had shared the misfortunes of their sovereign, and shown in his cause such proofs of the most devoted zeal, were called around him in his first glimpse of prosperity; and that, while ascending the throne, he entertained towards this class of his subjects, bound to him, as they were,

"By well-tried faith, and friendship's holy ties,"

the affections of a kind and grateful master? One distinguished emigrant, observing the suspicion and odium which so excusable a partiality awakened against the monarch, had the courage to urge, that, to ensure the stability of the throne, their sentence of banishment should have continued by the royal edict for ten years at least after the restoration of the house of Bourbon. It was in vain that the advocates of Louis called upon the people to observe, that no open steps had been taken in favour of the emigrants. Their claims were made and pleaded upon every hand; and, if little was expressly done in their favour, suspicion whispered, that the time was only waited for when ALL could be granted with safety. These suspicions, which

naturally occurred even to the candid, were carefully fostered and enlarged upon by the designing; and the distant clank of the feudal fetters was sounded into the ears of the peasants and burghers, while the uncertainty of property alarmed the numerous and powerful proprietors of forfeited domains.

The dislike to the clergy, and the fear of their reviving claims upon the confiscated church-lands, excited yet greater discontent than the king's apprehended partiality to the emigrants. The system of the Gallic church had been thoroughly undermined before its fall. Its constitution had been long irretrievably shattered; the whole head was sick, and the whole heart was faint. Doctrines of infidelity, everywhere general among the higher ranks, were professed by none with more publicity than by the superior orders of the clergy; and, respecting moral profligacy, it might be said of the church of France as of Ilion,

Intra muros peccatur, et extra.

It is no wonder, that, in a system so perverted, neither the real worth of many of the clergy, nor the enthusiastic zeal of others, was able to make a stand against the tide of popular odium, skilfully directed towards the church and its ministers by the reigning demagogues. Our catholic Highland neighbour must also pardon us, if we account the superstitious doctrines of his church among the chief causes of her downfall. The necessity of manning outworks, which are incapable of being effectually defended, adds not a little to the per-

plexities of a besieged garrison. Thus the sarcasms and sneers, justified, at least in our heretical eyes, by some part of the catholic doctrines, opened the way for universal contempt of the Christian system. At any rate, nothing is more certain, than that a general prejudice was, during the Revolution, successfully excited against the clergy, and that, among the lower Parisians in particular, it still exists with all its violence. Even on the day when the rabble of the Fauxbourgs hailed the triumphal return of Bonaparte to his throne, their respect for the hero of the hour did not prevent them from uttering the most marked expressions of dislike and contempt when Cardinal Fesch appeared in the procession. The cry was general, *A bas la calotte!* and the uncle of the restored emperor was obliged to dismount from his palfrey, and hide himself in a carriage.

The king and the Comte D'Artois are, in their distresses, understood to have sought and found consolation in the exercise of religious duties. They continued, in gratitude, those devotions which they had commenced in humble submission, and their regard was naturally extended to the ministers of that religion which they professed and practised. Conduct in itself so estimable, was, in the unhappy state of the public mind, misrepresented to their subjects. The landholders were alarmed by fear of the re-establishment of tithes; the labouring poor, and the petty shopkeeper, regarded the enforcing the long-neglected repose of the Sabbath, as a tax upon their industry and time, amounting to the hire of one day's labour out of the seven. The pro-

prietors of church-lands were alarmed, more especially when the rash zeal of some of the priesthood refused the offices of the church to those who had acquired its property. The Protestants in the south of France remembered the former severities exercised against them by the sovereigns of the house of Bourbon, and trembled for their repetition under a dynasty of monarchs, who professed the Catholic faith with sincerity and zeal. Add to these the profligate, who hate the restraints of religion, and the unthinking, who ridicule its abstracted doctrines, and you will have some idea how deeply this cause operated in rendering the Bourbons unpopular.

Those who dreaded, or pretended to dread, the innovations which might be effected by the influence of the clergy and the nobles,—a class which included, of course, all the old partisans of democratical principles,—assumed the name of Constitutionalists, and afterwards of Liberalists. The one was derived from their great zeal for the constitutional charter; the other from their affected superiority to the prejudices of ancient standing. Their ranks afforded a convenient and decent place of refuge for all those, who, having spent their lives in opposing the Bourbon interest, were now compelled to submit to a monarch of that family. They boasted, that it was not the person of the king to which they submitted, but the constitution which he had brought in his hand. Their party contained many partisans, especially among men distinguished by talent. Democracy, according to Burke, is the foodful nurse of ambition; and men, who propose to rise by the mere force of their genius, naturally favour that

form of government which offers fewest restraints to their career. This party was also united and strengthened by possessing many of those characters who had played the chief parts in the revolution, and who were fitted, both by talents and experience, to understand and conduct the complicated ramifications of political intrigue.

Among those best qualified to "ride on the whirlwind and direct the storm," was the celebrated Fouché, Duke of Otranto, whose intimate acquaintance with every intrigue in France had been acquired when he exercised the office of minister of the police under the emperor. There is every reason to think that this person had no intention of pushing opposition into rebellion; and that it was only his purpose to storm the cabinet, not to expel the monarch. It cannot be denied, that there were among the Liberalists the materials for forming, what is called, in England, a constitutional opposition, who, by assailing the ministry in the two Chambers, might have compelled them to respect the charter of the constitution; and to those amongst them, who were actuated either by the love of rational liberty, or by a modified and regulated spirit of ambition, the reign of the Bourbons afforded much greater facilities than the restoration of the military despotism of Bonaparte. Even to the very last moment, Fouché is said to have looked round for some *mezzo termine*, some means of compromise, which might render unnecessary the desperate experiment of the emperor's restoration. When Napoleon had landed, and was advancing wards Lyons, Fouché demanded an audience of

the king upon important business. The interview was declined, but two noblemen were appointed by Louis to receive his communication. He adverted to the perilous situation of the king; and offered even yet, provided his terms were granted, to arrest Napoleon's progress towards the capital. The ministers required to know the means which he meant to employ. He declined to state them, but professed himself confident of success. On his terms he was less reserved. He announced them to be, that the Duke of Orleans should be proclaimed lieutenant-general of the kingdom; and that Fouché himself and his party should immediately be called to offices of trust and power. These terms were of course rejected; but it was the opinion of the well-informed person from whom I had this remarkable anecdote, that Fouché would have been able to keep his word.

His recipe was not, however, put to the test; and he and his party immediately acceded to the conspiracy, and were forced onward by those formidable agents, of whom it may be observed, that, like fire and water, they are excellent servants, but dreadful masters,—I mean the army, whose state, under the Bourbons, deserves the consideration of a separate epistle.—Ever, my dear friend, I remain sincerely yours, PAUL.

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

Retrospect—the Army—Unpopularity of Louis—the Army dissatisfied—Irritation of the French—Departure of Allied Troops—Insults offered to Foreigners—Hostile Feelings of Government—Conspiracy in the Army—Bonaparte's Return—the Army join him—his Arrival at Paris—all hopes of Peace removed—Liberals join Bonaparte—the Royalists.

I LEFT off in my last with some account of the Constitutionalists, Liberalists, or whatsoever they are called, who opposed, from various causes, the measures of Louis XVIII., without having originally any purpose of throwing themselves into the arms of Bonaparte. To this desperate step they were probably induced by the frank and universal adhesion of the army to the commander under whom they had so often conquered. No man ever better understood both how to gain and how to maintain himself in the hearts of his soldiers than Bonaparte. Brief and abrupt in his speech, austere and inaccessible in his manners to the rest of his subjects, he was always ready to play the *camarade* with his soldiers; to listen to their complaints, to redress their grievances, and even to receive their suggestions. This accessibility was

limited to the privates and inferior officers. To the mareschals and generals he was even more distant and haughty than to his other subjects. Thus he connected himself intimately and personally with the main body of the army itself, but countenanced no intermediate favourite, whose popularity among the troops might interfere with his own.

To the motives of personal attachment, so deeply rooted, and so industriously fostered, must be added the confidence of the soldiers in military talents so brilliantly displayed, and in the long course of victory which had identified the authority of Napoleon with the glory of the French arms. To a train of the most uniform and splendid success, they might indeed have opposed the reverses of the Peninsular war, or the disastrous retreat from Moscow and the battle of Leipsic, with all the subsequent reverses; but, as soldiers and as Frenchmen, they were little inclined to dwell upon the darker shades of the retrospect. Besides, partiality and national vanity found excuses for these misfortunes. In the Peninsula, Bonaparte did not command; in Russia, the elements fought against him; at Leipsic, he was deserted by the Saxons; and in France, betrayed, as they pretended, by Marmont. Besides, a great part of the soldiers who, in 1814–15, filled the French ranks, had been prisoners of war during Bonaparte's last unfortunate campaigns, and he was only experimentally known to them as the victor of Marengo, Ulm, Austerlitz, Jena, Friedland, and Wagram. You cannot have forgotten the enthusiasm with which the prisoners on parole at —— used to speak of

the military renown of the emperor; nor their frank declaration at leaving us, that they might fight with their hands for the Bourbons, but would fight with hand and heart for Napoleon. Even the joy of their return seemed balanced, if not overpowered, by the reflection, that it originated in the dethronement of the emperor. To recollect the sentiments of these officers, unsuppressed even in circumstances most unfavourable for avowing them, will give you some idea of the ardour with which they glowed when they found themselves again in arms, and forming part of a large and formidable military force, actuated by the same feelings.

It was the obvious policy of the Bourbons to eradicate, if possible, this dangerous attachment, or to give it a direction towards the reigning family. For this purpose, every attention was paid to the army; they were indulged, praised, and flattered; but flattery, praise, and indulgence, were only received as the surly mastiff accepts, with growling sullenness, the food presented to him by a new master. There was no common tone of feeling to which the Bourbons could successfully appeal. It was in vain they attempted to conjure up the antiquated fame of *Henri Quatre* to men who, if ever they had heard of that monarch, must have known that his martial exploits were as much beneath those of Bonaparte, as his moral character was superior to the Corsican's. In the reigning family there was no individual who possessed so decided a military character as to fill, even in appearance, the loss which the army had sustained in their formidable commander, and the moment of national

difficulty was unfortunately arrived, in which the personal activity of the monarch, a circumstance which, in peaceful times, is of little consequence, was almost indispensably essential to the permanence of his authority.

Burke says somewhere, that the King of France, when restored, ought to spend six hours of the day on horseback. "I speak," he adds, "according to the letter." The personal infirmities of the good old man, who has been called to wear this crown of thorns, put the required activity out of the question But the justice of the maxim has not been the less evident. Not only the soldiers, but the idle and gaping population of Paris, despised the peaceful and meritorious tranquillity of Louis XVIII., and recalled with regret the bustling and feverish movements of Bonaparte, which alternately gave them terror and surprise and amusement. Indeed, such was the restless activity of the ex-emperor's disposition, that he contrived, as it were, to multiply himself in the eyes of the Parisians. In an incredibly short space of time, he might be seen in the most distant quarters of the city, and engaged in the most different occupations Now he was galloping along a line of troops,—now alone, or with a single aid-de-camp, inspecting some public building,—in another quarter you beheld him in his carriage,—and again found him sauntering among the objects of the fine arts in the Louvre. With a people, so bustling, so active, and so vainglorious as the French, this talent of ubiquity went a great way to compensate the want of those virtues which the emperor did not pretend to, and

which the legitimate monarch possesses in such perfection. "The king," said an Englishman to a Frenchman, "is a man of most excellent disposi tions."—"*Sans doute.*"—"Well read and well informed."—"*Mais, oui.*"—"A gentleman in his feelings and manners."—"*Assurément, Monsieur, il est né François.*"—"Placable, merciful, moral, religious."—"*Ah, d'accord—mais après tout,*" (a mode in which a Frenchman always winds up his argument,) "*il faut avouer, qu'un Roi qui ne peut monter à cheval est un bien chetif animal.*"—This opinion, in which the possession of the equestrian art was balanced against all mental qualities, is not peculiar to the person by whom it was delivered; and it is certain that the king's affairs suffered greatly by his being unable to show himself, even in the exterior appearance, as a military commander. Ney, who was probably for the time sincere in his professions of zeal to the sovereign whom he so soon afterwards deserted, recommended that he should review the regiments as they passed through Paris, even if it were in a litter. But the affecting apology of the king is best pleaded in the words of his own manifesto. "Enfeebled by age and twenty-five years of misfortune, I cannot say, like my ancestor, *Rally around my white plume;* but I am willing to follow to the dangers to which I cannot lead."

None of the royal family, unfortunately, possessed the temper and talents necessary for supplying the king's deficiencies. The Duke d'Angouleme, like his father Monsieur, was retired, and understood to be bigoted to the Catholic observances,

and much ruled by the clergy. The Duke de Berri, with more activity, had a fierce and ungovernable temper, which often burst out upon improper and unseemly occasions. Under their auspices, the attempts to new-model the army, by gradually introducing officers attached to the royal family, gave much offence, without producing any sensible advantage. In some instances the new officers were not received by the corps to whom they were sent; in some they were deprived of the influence which should attend their rank, by the combination of the soldiers and officers; in other cases, they were perverted by the universal principles of the corps whom they were appointed to command; and, finally, there were instances, as in the case of Labedoyere, in which the court were imposed upon by specious professions, and induced to promote persons the most inimical to the royal interests. The re-establishment of the household troops, in which a comparatively small body of *gardes de corps* were, at a great expense, and with peculiar privileges, established as the immediate guardians of the king's person, was resented by the army in general, but more especially by the *ci-devant* imperial, now royal, guards.

In a word, matters had gone so far, that the army, as in Cromwell's time, existed as an isolated and distinct body, not under the government of the legislature, but claiming exclusive rights and privileges, and enjoying a separate and independent political existence of its own. Whenever this separation between the civil and military orders takes

place, revolution and civil war cannot be far distant.

But there was one powerful cause of irritation common to the French nation in general, though particularly affecting the army. That very people of Europe, the most ambitious of fame in arms, who so lately and so fully stood possessed of the palm of conquest, which for centuries had been the object of their national ambition, had at once lost that pre-eminence, and with it

> "The earthquake-voice of victory,
> To 'them' the breath of life." [1]

The height to which their military reputation had been raised, the enormous sacrifices which had been made to attain it, the rapid extension of their empire, and the suddenness of their fall in power and in esteem, were subjects of the most embittered reflection. We in Britain vainly imagined, that the real losses which France sustained in extending her influence and her triumphs, must have disgusted her with the empty fame for which she paid so dearly. But however the French might feel under the immediate pressure of each new conscription, nothing is more certain than that their griefs, like the irritation of men impressed into our naval service, were forgotten in the eclat of the next victory, and that all the waste of blood and treasure by which it was obtained, was accounted a cheap expenditure for the glory of France.[2]

[1] Byron's Ode to Napoleon.]

[2] "A more tremendous system certainly never appeared for the desolation and subjection of the world. Every country was to be compelled in succession to furnish men for the plun-

When a people, with minds so constituted, beheld within the walls of their capital the troops of the nations whom they had so often subdued, their first effort was to disguise, even from themselves, the humiliation to which they were subjected. When they had looked so long upon a stranger as to be certain he was not laughing at them, which seemed to be their first apprehension, their usual opening was a begging of the general question:—"You know we were not conquered—our reception of the king was a voluntary act—our general and unanimous joy bears witness that this is the

der and conquest of others. If any one nation presumed to be dissatisfied, the population of another was to be driven in arms to oppress it. The application of this dreadful organization was obvious. If any portion of this compulsory army exhibited signs of discontent, it was only necessary to march it to the most wasteful point of service, and it would be destroyed before it had become dangerous, and yet not till it had performed a certain quantity of needful work for its fell employer. His vast designs have been hitherto executed with the most lavish profusion of human blood; he cares neither for distance, seasons, country, famine, nor disease. To overpower a certain part of an enemy's army, it is necessary to surprise, out-number, and surround it. Frequently he can only do this by making his men perform marches that are beyond the ordinary powers of human nature, and through countries scarcely passable. It is indifferent to him how many thousands drop from mere fatigue and want. It is sufficient that enough reach the point of action to accomplish his purposes. If he disperses the enemy, he gains a new extent of human population to drive into his ranks, and to make the instruments, however unwilling, of new depredations. Being consumed so fast, there is no time for mutiny, and little demand for pay. *For a certain time, therefore, this terrible engine of war acts in his favour with dreadful energy; though it is one which may ultimately recoil upon himself.*"—*Quarterly Review*, May, 1809, p. 446.]

triumph of peace over war, not of Europe over France." With such emollients did they endeavour to dress the surface of a wound which internally was inflamed and rankled.

These harmless subterfuges of vanity held good, until they had forgotten the late alarming and precarious state in, which their country had been placed, and particularly until the departure of the allied troops (a measure most impolitically precipitate) had removed the wholesome awe which the presence of a superior force necessarily imposed Then instantly operated the principle of Tacitus—*qui timeri desierint, odisse incipient.* A thousand hostile indications, trifling perhaps individually, but important from their number and reiteration, pointed out the altered state of the public mind towards the allies. The former complaisance of the French nation, founded perhaps as much upon their good opinion of themselves as on their natural disposition to oblige others, was at once overclouded, and the sight of a foreigner became odious, as reminding them of the aspect of a conqueror. Caricatures, farces, lampoons, all the *petite guerre* by which individual malice has occasionally sought gratification, were resorted to, as the only expressions of wounded feeling now competent to the Great Nation. The equanimity with which the English in particular gave the losers leave to laugh as loudly as losers and beaten men could, rather exasperated than appeased the resentment of the French. The most unoffending foreigners were exposed to insult, and embroiled in personal quarrels with gratuitous antagonists in the public places

of Paris, where, in former times, the name of a stranger was a sufficient protection, even when an aggressor. All these circumstances indicated a tone of feeling, ulcerated by the sense of degradation, and which burned to regain self-opinion, by wreaking vengeance on their conquerors. The nation was in the situation of losing gamblers, who reflect indeed upon their losses with mortification and regret, but without repenting the folly which caused them; and like them also, the French only waited some favourable conjuncture again to peril the remains of their fortune upon the same precarious hazard.

The language of the government of France was gradually and insensibly tinged by the hostile passions of her population. The impatient and irritated state of the army dictated to her representative, even at the Congress, a language different from what the European republic had a right to expect from the counsellors of the monarch whom their arms had restored. It is probable the government felt that their army resembled an evoked fiend pressing for employment, and ready to tear to pieces even the wizard whom he serves, unless instantly supplied with other means of venting his malevolence. But if it was a part of the Bourbon policy, rather to encounter the risk and loss of an external war, than to leave their army in peace and at leisure to brood over their discontents and disgraces, they had no time allowed them to make the ungracious experiment. A plot was already on foot and far advanced, to ensure, as it was supposed, the recovery of the national glory, by again placing on the

throne him, under whose auspices, and by whose unparalleled military successes, it had been formerly raised to the highest pitch of military splendour.

Such was the influence of the various causes which I have endeavoured to detail, that the reception of the insinuations of the conspirators, particularly in the army, exceeded their wishes, and that their plot nearly broke out before the time proposed. It is at least pretty certain that their zeal outwent the discretion of their principal, and that Napoleon more than once declined the invitations which he received to return from Elba. The co-operation of Murat was a point of extreme moment; and until a Neapolitan army could approach the north of Italy, Bonaparte's situation must have been desperate, supposing him to have received a check in the south of France at the outset of his expedition. A series of dark intrigues therefore, commenced between the principal conspirators and King Joachim, which ended in his winding up his courage to the perilous achievement which they recommended. In the north of Italy were many officers and soldiers who had formerly served under Eugene Beauharnois. And it was reasonably believed, considering the weak state of the Austrians, that Murat's army, Neapolitans as they were, might have at least made their way so far as to have recruited their ranks by the union of these veterans.

Internally the conspiracy proceeded with the most surprising secrecy and success. The meetings of the chief leaders were held under the auspices

of Madame Maret, Duchess of Bassano. But subordinate agents were to be found everywhere, and more especially among the coffeehouses and brothels of the Palais Royale, those assemblages of every thing that is desperate and profligate. "Bonaparte," said a Royalist to me the other day, "had with him all the *rouge-men* and all the *rouge-women*, and, in our country, their numbers are nineteen out of twenty." One of these places of nocturnal rendezvous, called the Café Montaussier, was distinguished for the audacity with which its frequenters discussed national politics, and the vociferous violence with which they espoused the cause of the dethroned emperor. That the police, whose surveillance, in Bonaparte's reign, extended to the fireside and bedchamber of every citizen, should have either overlooked, or observed with supine indifference, those indications of treason in places open for public rendezvous, argues the incapacity of the superior directors, and the treachery of those who were employed under them. Even the partial discovery of Excelman's correspondence with Murat served but to show the imbecility of a government, who could not, or durst not, bring him to punishment. The well-known symbol of the Violet, by which Bonaparte's friends intimated his return to France with the reappearance of that flower in spring, was generally known and adopted, at least two months before the period of his landing, yet attracted no attention on the part of the police. Indeed, so gross was their negligence, that a Frenchman, finding his friend ignorant of some well-known piece of news, observed, in reply

Vous êtes apparemment de la police? as if to belong to that body inferred a necessary ignorance of every thing of importance that was going forward in the kingdom.

With so much activity on the one side, and such supine negligence on the other, joined to a state of public feeling so favourable to his enterprise, one is scarcely surprised at Napoleon's wonderful success. The mass of the army went over to him as one man; and the superior officers, who found their influence too feeble to check the progress of the invader, took, with a few distinguished exceptions, the resolution to swim along with the stream which they could not oppose. But, however discontented with the government of the Bourbons, the middling ranks in civil life were alarmed as with a clap of thunder by this momentous event. They beheld themselves once more engaged in a war with all Europe, and heard once more the Prussian trumpets at the gates of the metropolis. To dispel these alarms, Napoleon, with a versatile address, which could hardly have succeeded anywhere save in France, endeavoured to put such a colour upon his own views as best suited those whom he was immediately addressing. To the army, his proclamation, issued at Lyons, held forth immediate war, conquest, and the re-establishment of the military fame of France. But, when he reached Paris, he seemed anxious to modify this declaration. He appealed to the Treaty of Paris, by which he pretended to abide, and he expressed himself contented that the rights and boundaries of France should be limited according to the wishes

of the allied powers as there expressed. He did more; he even alleged that his enterprise was executed with their connivance. With the assurance of a shameless charlatan, as one author expresses it, he asserted, that his escape was countenanced by England, otherwise, as he reasoned with apparent force, how was he permitted to leave Elba? and that his restoration had the approbation of Austria would be made manifest, he pretended, by the immediate return of Maria Louisa and her son to the French territory. He even carried the farce so far as to prepare and send away state carriages to meet those valued pledges of his father-in-law's amity, conscious that the success of this gross imposition would serve his cause during the moments of general doubt and indecision, though certain to be discovered in a very few days. Meanwhile, an attempt was actually made to carry off his son from the city of Vienna, and defeated only by the want of presence of mind in one of the conspirators, who, being arrested by the police, imprudently offered a handful of gold to obtain his escape, which excited the attention and suspicion of the officer who had seized him. No doubt, had the attempt succeeded, the restoration of the child would have been represented as the effects of the favour of Austria towards the father.

The declarations of the allied powers soon removed the hopes of peace, by which those who were pacifically disposed had been, for a short time, flattered. A war, of a kind altogether new, with respect to the extent of the military preparations, was now approaching and imminent, and the

address of Chatterton's Sir Charles Baldwin to the English might have been well applied to the people of France,—

> "Say, were ye tired of godly peace,
> And godly Henry's reign,
> That you would change your easy days
> For those of blood and pain?
>
> Ah! fickle people, ruin'd land,
> Thou wilt know peace no moe;
> When Richard's sons exalt themselves,
> Thy streets with blood shall flow."

But there remained comfort to the more peaceable part of the community in the confidence of assured victory, so warmly expressed by the soldiers; and then they hoped that the short and successful war would conclude so soon as France should be restored to, what they were pleased to term, her natural boundaries. *Paix au dela du Rhin* was the general wish—the soldiers affected to aim at no more remote conquest—the citizen was willing to face the burdens of a war for an object so limited, and for the re-establishment of *la gloire nationale.* And thus were the versatile people of Paris induced to look with an eye of hope, instead of terror upon the approaching storm.

Those who were attached to the parties of the Liberalists and Royalists saw Bonaparte's successful progress with other eyes. But the Liberalists, severed from the family of Bourbon by the opinions and incidents which I have already detailed to you, were, in a manner, forced into the service of the new emperor, although, doubtless, their wishes were to substitute a government of a more popular

construction for that of the restored monarch Their chiefs, too, the philosophical Carnot, and the patriotic Fouché, did not disdain to accept, from the hand of the restored heir of the Revolution, the power, dignities, and emoluments which he artfully held out to them. And, in becoming a part of his administration, they were supposed to warrant to him the attachment of their followers; while Napoleon, by professing to embrace the constitution with some stipulations in favour of general freedom, was presumed to give a sufficient pledge that henceforth he was to regard himself only as the head of a limited monarchy. How far this good understanding would have survived his return to Paris with victory, it is scarce necessary to enquire; for not even the adhesion of Carnot and Fouché prevented symptoms of open feud between their party and the Imperialists, evinced in many tart debates in the Lower Chamber of Representatives, from which it is evident, that they regarded each other with aver sion and suspicion, and that their union was not likely to survive the circumstances which occasioned it.

In the meanwhile, they were embarked in a common cause; and it does not appear that the Libe ralists were slack in affording assistance to Bonaparte in his preparations for external war. Like the factions in Jerusalem, during her final siege, they suspended their mutual dissensions until they should have repulsed the common enemy. There is, nevertheless, a rumour, which is at least countenanced by the favour which Fouché for some time held at the court of Louis XVIII., that even

while the king was at Ghent, the wily chief of the Liberalists maintained a correspondence with his ex-monarch. But, in general, that party, comprehending the various classes of Liberalists, from the Constitutionalist to the Jacobin, may be considered as having identified themselves with the Imperialists, and undertaken the same chance of battle to which the adherents of Bonaparte had made their solemn appeal.

There was a third party in France, and a powerful one, if its real force could have been mustered and called into action. For, notwithstanding all that I have said of the various causes which divided the opinions of the nation, it must necessarily be supposed that the Bourbon family had, in many provinces, an equal, and in some a predominating interest. Unfortunately, the Royalists, being taken at unawares, remained altogether stupified and paralysed by the sudden and unanimous defection of the army. The premature, or ill-conducted attempts of resistance at Marseilles and Bourdeaux, were so easily subdued, as to discredit and discountenance all farther opposition. In La Vendée only there was an open military resistance to Bonaparte under the banners of the king, and there it was speedily brought to an end by the exertions of the Imperial General, who has since received just credit for employing more mild means for that purpose than were authorized by his instructions.

The Royalists, in the other provinces, contented themselves with opposing a sort of *vis inertiæ* to the efforts which Napoleon made for calling forth

the national force, and awaited with anxiety, but without any active exertion, the expected progress of the allies. This passive resistance was particularly remarkable in the departments of the North, several of which would render Napoleon no assistance, either in recruits or money, and where entreaties, threats, and even attempts at force, could not put in motion a single battalion of the National Guard.

On the other hand, the Eastern departments which bordered on Germany, met the wishes of Bonaparte in their utmost extent. They remembered the invasion of the preceding year with all the feelings of irritation which such recollections naturally produce. Accordingly, they formed free corps of volunteers—laboured at fortifying towns and passes—constructed *têtes-du-pont*—and multiplied all means of defence which the face of the country afforded. Thus it happened, fortunately for Bonaparte, that the part of the kingdom whose inhabitants were most disposed to consider the war as a national quarrel, was that of which the territory was most immediately open to invasion.

I shall continue this statement, my dear Peter, in a letter to the Major, to whose department the military details properly belong; and, in the meanwhile, am ever yours,

PAUL

LETTER V.

PAUL TO THE MAJOR.

Promptitude of Napoleon—Military Preparations—Defeat of Murat—Disposition of the French Army—Artillery—Cavalry—Cuirassiers—Infantry—Bonaparte's Plan for Opening the Campaign—Proposed Advance into Belgium—Self-importance of the Soldiery—their Feuds—the Army Assembled—Bonaparte's Address.

I PRESUME, my dear Major, that our political friend has communicated to you my last epistle. My next enters upon high matters, which I have some scruple to treat of to you; for who would willingly read lectures upon the art of war before Alexander the Great? But, after all, as Waterloo was a battle very different from that of Bunker's-hill, and from two or three other later actions, with the details of which you often regale us, I conceive that even a bungling account of it from a tactician so wretched as I am, may afford some matter for your military commentaries. At any rate, active investigation has not been wanting; as I have surveyed the fields of action, and conversed familiarly with many of the distinguished officers, who there laid a claim to the eternal gratitude of their country. Your kindness will excuse my blunders, and

your ingenuity will be applied to detect and supply my deficiencies.

No part of Napoleon's political life, marked as it has always been by the most rapid and extraordinary promptitude in military preparation, affords such a display of activity, as the brief interval which occurred between his resuming the imperial sceptre, and resigning it, it is to be presumed, for ever. Although the conciliating the Liberalists, and paralyzing the Royalists, occupied some time; and although it was necessary to sacrifice several days to show, and to the national love of fanfaronade, he was never an instant diverted from his purpose. While he seemed to be fully occupied with the political discussions of the various parties, —with shows, and processions, and reviews of corps of children under twelve years old, his more serious preparations for the death-struggle which he expected to encounter, were as gigantic in their character as incessant in their progress. Every effort was used to excite the population to assume arms, and to move forward corps of national guards to relieve in garrison the troops of the line now called into more active service. And while Bonaparte was convoking in the Champ de Mai, as his mock assembly of the people was fantastically entitled, a number of persons to whom the revolution had given dangerous celebrity, together with his own military adherents,—a class of men of all others most unfit for being members of a deliberative assembly,—while, I say, this political farce was rehearsing and acting, the real tragedy was in active preparation. Cannon, muskets, arms of every

description, were forged and issued from the manufactories and arsenals with incredible celerity. The old corps were recruited from the conscripts of 1814; retired veterans were again called forth to their banners; new levies were instituted, under the various names of free-corps, federés, and volunteers; the martial spirit of France was again roused to hope and energy; and the whole kingdom seemed transformed at once into an immense camp, of which Napoleon was the leader and soul. One large army defiled towards Belgium, where the neighbourhood of the English and Prussian troops excited alarm; other armies were assembled in Alsace, in Lorraine, in Franche Comté, at the foot of the Alps, and on the verge of the Pyrenees. It only remained to be discovered on which side the storm was to burst.

There is little doubt, that Bonaparte, reckoning upon the success of Murat, or hoping at least on his making a permanent diversion, had destined the north of Italy for the first scene of active and personal warfare. A threat in that quarter would have been sufficient to divert from the main struggle the whole force of Austria, already sensible, from sad experience, how vulnerable she was through her Italian frontier. Many of the Russian troops would probably have been detached to her assistance, and while a triple barrier of fortresses and garrisons of the first order, with a strong covering army, was opposed on the frontier of Flanders to the English and Prussian armies, Bonaparte himself might have taken the field on the theatre of his original triumphs, and have removed the war from

the French territory, with the certainty, in case of success, that his army would be recruited among the Cisalpine veterans of Eugene Beauharnois. But Austria, on this pressing alarm, exerted herself with an activity unknown to her annals; and the troops which she rapidly hurried forward to meet Murat, exhibited, in the very first conflicts, the military superiority of the northern warriors.— "These barbarians," said the Neapolitans, after the skirmish at Rimini, "fight as if they had two lives; what chance have we against them, who pretend only to one?" And to save that single title to existence, Murat's army fled with such celerity, and so little resistance, that the campaign was end ed almost as soon as begun, and with it terminated the reign of King Joachim over the delicious kingdom of Naples. No king, in a fairy tale, ever obtained a crown so easily, or lost it in a manner so simple, and at the same time so speedy. His discomfiture was attended with the most disadvantageous consequences to Bonaparte, who thus appeared hermetically sealed within the realm of France, by hostile armies advancing on all hands, and compelled to await the conflict upon his own ground.

But he neither lost courage, nor slackened his preparations, on account of his relative's disaster. The French grand army, already in the highest order, was still farther augmented in number and equipments. It became now obvious, that Flanders, or the adjoining French frontier, must be the scene of action. The general headquarters were fixed at Laon; a very strong position, where some

preparations were made for forming an army of reserve, in case of a disaster. The first corps occupied Valenciennes, and the second Maubeuge, communicating by their right wing with the armies assembled in the Ardennes and on the Moselle, and resting their left upon the strong fortifications of Lisle. Here they waited the numerous reinforcements of every kind which Bonaparte poured towards their position.

The deficiency of artillery was chiefly apprehended. The allies had, in 1814, carried off most of the French field-trains. But, by incredible exertions, the loss was more than supplied; for, besides the usual train attached to separate corps, each division of the army had a park of reserve, and the imperial guard, in particular, had a superb train of guns, consisting almost entirely of new pieces. It is remarkable, that in casting these fine engines of war, the old republican moulds had, in general, been employed; for I observed, that most of the guns taken at Waterloo have engraved upon them the emphatic inscriptions, Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité, and so forth; not to mention others, which, in honour of philosophy, bore the names of Voltaire, Rousseau, and other writers of deistical eminence. The army in all possessed more than three hundred guns; a quantity of artillery which has been thought rather beyond the proportion of its numbers.

Cavalry was another species of force in which Bonaparte was supposed to be peculiarly weak. But the very reverse proved to be the case. The care of Louis XVIII. had remounted several of the

regiments which had suffered in the campaigns of 1813 and 1814; and the exertions of Napoleon and his officers completed their equipment, as well as the levy of others; so that a finer body of cavalry never took the field. They were upwards of twenty thousand in number; of whom the lancers were distinguished by their address, activity, and ferocity; and the cuirassiers, of whom there are said to have been nine regiments, by the excellence of their appointments, and the superior power of their horses. This last corps was composed of soldiers selected for their bravery and experience, and gave the most decisive proofs of both in the dreadful battle of Waterloo. Their cuirasses consisted of a breast-plate and back, joined together by clasps, like the ancient plate-armour. Those of the soldiers were of iron, those of the officers of brass, inlaid with steel. They are proof against a musket-ball, unless it comes in a perfectly straight direction. To these arms was added a helmet, with cheek-pieces, and their weapons of offence were a long broad-sword and pistols. They carried no carabines. The horses of the cuirassiers, although, upon trial, they proved inferior to those of our heavy cavalry, were probably better than those of any other corps in Europe. They were selected with great care, and many of the carriage and saddle-horses, which Bonaparte had pressed for the equipment of the army, were assigned to mount these terrible regiments. Yet, however formidable the aspect and onset of cuirassiers may be, emboldened as they are by a sense of comparative security, and affecting the imagination of those whom they assail by

the flash and display of their panoply, it may be doubted whether the use of defensive arms for the body is, upon the whole, to be recommended. The weight of the cuirass becomes, in the course of a campaign, burdensome both to man and horse; and, after a few hours' active exertion in action, the horse of course is blown, and the rider, rendered less active as a swordsman by the unpliable armour in which he is sheathed, is outstripped, out-manœuvred, and cut down, by his more agile opponent.

Of the infantry of the French, it was impossible to speak too highly, in point of bravery and discipline in the field. The *élite* of the army consisted of the imperial guards, who were at least 20,000 strong. These chosen cohorts had submitted with the most sullen reluctance to the change of sovereigns in 1814; and no indulgence nor flattery, which the members of the Bourbon family could bestow upon them, had availed to eradicate their affection to their former master, which often displayed itself at times, and in a manner, particularly offensive to those who were their temporary and nominal commanders. The imperial guards were pledged, therefore, as deeply as men could be, to maintain the new revolution which their partiality had accomplished, and to make good the boast, which had caused France to rely "upon their stars, their fortune, and their strength." The other corps of infantry, all of whom participated in the same confidence in themselves and their general, might amount, including the artillery, to 110,000 men, which, with the guards and cavalry, formed a gross

total of 150,000 soldiers, completely armed and equipped, and supplied, even to profusion, with every kind of ammunition. So fascinated was this brilliant army with recollection of former victories, and confidence in their present strength, that they not only heard with composure the report of the collected armies which marched against them from every quarter of Europe, but complained of the delay which did not lead them into instant battle. They were under a general who knew well how to avail himself of those feelings of confidence and ardour.

It had been supposed, as well in France and in the army, as in other parts of Europe, that Bonaparte meant to suffer the allies to commit the first hostile act, by entering the French territory. And although the reputation of being the actual aggressor was of little consequence, where both parties had so fully announced their hostile intentions, it was still supposed that a defensive war, in which he could avail himself of the natural and artificial strength of French Flanders, might have worn out, as in the early war of the revolution, the armies and spirits of the allies, and exposed them to all those privations and calamities peculiar to an invading army, in a country which is resolutely defended.

But the temper of Bonaparte, ardent, furious, and impetuous, always aiming rather at attack than defence, combined with the circumstances in which he found himself, to dictate a more daring system of operations.

His power was not yet so fully established as

to ensure him the national support during a protracted war of various chances, and he needed now, more than ever, the dazzling blaze of decisive victory to renew the charm, or *prestige*, as he himself was wont to call it, once attached to his name and fortunes. Considerations peculiar to the nature of the approaching campaign, probably united with those which were personal to himself. The forces now approaching France greatly exceeded in numbers those which that exhausted kingdom could levy to oppose them, and it seemed almost impossible to protect her frontiers at every vulnerable point. If the emperor had attempted to make head against the British and Prussians in French Flanders, he must have left open to the armies of Russia and Austria the very road by which they had last year advanced to Paris. On the other hand, if, trusting to the strength of the garrison towns and fortresses on the Flanders frontiers, Napoleon had conducted his principal army against those of the Emperors of Russia and Austria, the numerous forces of the Duke of Wellington and Blucher might have enabled them to mask these strong places by a covering army, and either operate upon the flank of Napoleon's troops, or strike directly at the root of his power by a rapid march upon the capital. Such were the obvious disadvantages of a defensive system.

A sudden irruption into Belgium, as it was more suited to the daring genius of Napoleon, and better calculated to encourage the ardour of his troops, afforded him also a more reasonable prospect of success. He might, by a rapid movement, direct

his whole force against the army either of England or of Prussia, before its strength could be concentrated and united to that of its ally. He might thus defeat his foes in detail, as he had done upon similar occasions, with the important certainty, that one great and splendid victory would enable him to accomplish a levy *en masse*, and thus bring to the field almost every man in France capable of bearing arms; an advantage which would infinitely more than compensate any loss of lives which might be sustained in effecting it. Such an advantage, and the imposing attitude which he would be thereby entitled to assume towards the allies, might have affected the very elements upon which the coalition was founded, and afforded to Bonaparte time, means, and opportunity, of intimidating the weak and seducing the stronger members of the confederacy. In Belgium, also, if successful, he might hope to recruit and extend his army by new levies, drawn from a country which had so lately been a part of his own kingdom, and which had not yet had time to attach itself to the new dynasty to which it had been assigned. For this purpose, he carried muskets with him to equip an insurrectionary army, and officers of their own nation to command them; and although the loyal Belgians were much shocked and scandalized at the hopes expressed by those preparations, it may be presumed they would not have been so confidently entertained without some degree of foundation.

The proposed advance into Belgium had the additional advantage of relieving the people of France from the presence of an army, which, even

upon its native soil, was a scourge of no ordinary severity. The superiority which long war and a train of successes had given to the military profession in France, over every other class of society, had totally reversed in that country the wholesome and pacific maxim, *Cedant arma togæ*. In the public walks, in the coffeehouses and theatres of Paris, the conduct of the officers towards a *pekin*, (a cant word by which, in their arrogance, they distinguished any citizen of a peaceful profession,) was, in the highest degree, insolent and overbearing. The late events had greatly contributed to inflame the self-importance of the soldiery. Like the prætorian bands of Rome, the janizaries of Constantinople, or the strelitzes of Moscow, the army of France possessed all the real power of the state. They had altered the government of their country, deposed one monarch, and re-elevated another to the throne which he had abdicated. This gave them a consciousness of power and importance, neither favourable to moderation of conduct nor to military discipline. Even while yet in France, they did not hesitate to inflict upon their fellow-subjects many of those severities, which soldiery in general confine to the country of an enemy; and, to judge from the accounts of the peasantry, the subsequent march of the allies inflicted upon them fewer, or at least less wilful evils, than those which they had experienced at the hands of their own countrymen. These excesses were rarely checked by the officers; some of whom indulged their own rapacity under cover of that of the troops, while the recent events which invited soldiers to judge and act for them-

selves, had deprived others, who, doubtless, viewed this license with grief and resentment, of the authority necessary to enforce a wholesome restraint upon their followers.

This looseness of discipline was naturally and necessarily followed by dissensions and quarrels among the troops themselves. The guards, proud of their fame in arms, and of their title and privileges, were objects of the jealousy of the other corps of the army, and this they repaid by contumely and arrogance, which led, in many cases, to bloody affrays. The cavalry and infantry had dissensions of old standing, which occasioned much mutiny and confusion. Above all, the license of pillage led to perpetual quarrels, where one regiment or body of troops, who were employed in plundering a village or district, were interrupted by others who desired to share with them in the gainful task of oppression.

These feuds, and the laxity of discipline in which chiefly they originated, may be traced to Bonaparte's total disuse in this, as in his more fortunate campaigns, of the ordinary precautions for maintaining an army by the previous institution of magazines. By neglecting to make such provision, he no doubt greatly simplified his own task as a general, and accelerated, in the same degree, his preparations for a campaign, and the march of an army unencumbered with forage-carts. But he injured, in a much greater proportion, the discipline and moral qualities of his soldiery, thus turned loose upon the country to shift for their own subsistence; and,—had such a motive weighed with

him,—he aggravated, in a tenfold degree, the horrors of warfare.

The evils arising from the presence of his army were now to be removed into the territories of an enemy. The marches and combination of the various corps d'armée were marked in a distinguished manner by that high military talent which planned Bonaparte's most fortunate campaigns. In the same day, and almost at the same hour, three large armies; that from Laon, headed by the emperor himself; that of the Ardennes, commanded by the notorious Vandamme; and that of the Moselle, under the orders of General Girard, having broken up from their different cantonments, attained, by a simultaneous movement, a united alignement upon the extreme frontiers of Belgium. The good order and combination with which the grand and complicated movements of these large armies were executed, was much admired among the French officers, and received as the happy augury of future success.

To his army thus assembled, Bonaparte, upon the 14th of June, 1815, made one of those inflated and bombastic addresses, half riddle, half prophecy, which he had taught the French armies to admire as masterpieces of eloquence. He had not neglected his system of fortunate days; for that upon which he issued his last proclamation was the anniversary of the Marengo and Friedland victories; on which, as well as after those of Austerlitz and Wagram, he assured his troops he had fallen into the generous error of using his conquests with too much lenity. He reminded his soldiers of his victory over Prussia at Jena; and having no such

advantage to boast over the English, he could only appeal to those among his ranks who had been prisoners in Britain, whether their situation had not been very uncomfortable. He assured them they had the private good wishes of the Belgians, Hanoverians, and soldiers of the Confederation of the Rhine, although for the present forced into the enemy's ranks; and concluded by asserting, that the moment was arrived for every courageous Frenchman to conquer or die.

This speech was received with infinite applause (*comme de raison*), and on the morning of the subsequent day (15th June) his army was in motion to enter Belgium.

But my exhausted paper reminds me that this must be the boundary of my present epistle.—Yours, affectionately,

PAUL.

LETTER VI.

PAUL TO THE MAJOR—IN CONTINUATION.

Campaign opens—British and Prussian Positions—Treachery of Fouché—Bonaparte's advance—Occupation of Charleroi—Crossing of the Sambre—Ney commands the Left Wing—Bonaparte the Centre and the Right—Advance of the Allied Troops—Cameron's Gathering—Black Brunswickers—Brussels—Action at Quatre Bras—French occupy Le Bois de Bossu—Are repulsed by General Maitland—Post at Quatre Bras—Charge by French Cavalry—Gallant defence of the 42d—Loss of the British—Confidence inspired by their success.

I GAVE you, in my last, some account of the auspices under which Bonaparte opened the last of his fields. The bloody game was now begun; but, to understand its progress, it is necessary to mark the position of the opposite party.

Notwithstanding the fertility of Belgium, the maintenance of the numerous troops which were marched into that kingdom from Prussia, and transported thither from England, was attended with great burdens to the inhabitants. They were therefore considerably dispersed, in order to secure their being properly supplied with provisions. The British cavalry in particular, were cantoned upon the Dender, for the convenience of forage. The

Prussians held the line upon the Sambre, which might be considered as the advanced posts of the united armies.

Another obvious motive contributed to the dislocation of the allied force. The enemy having to choose his point of attack along an extended frontier, it was impossible to concentrate their army upon any one point, leaving the other parts of the boundary exposed to the inroads of the foe; and this is an advantage which the assailant must, in war, always possess over his antagonist, who holds a defensive position. Yet the British and Prussian divisions were so posted, with reference to each other, as to afford the means of sudden combination and mutual support; and, indeed, without such an arrangement, they could not have ultimately sustained the attack of the French, and Bonaparte's scheme of invasion must have been successful on all points.

But though these precautions were taken, it was generally thought they would not be necessary. A strong belief prevailed among the British officers, that the campaign was to be conducted defensively on the part of the French; and when the certain tidings of the concentration of the enemy's forces, upon the extreme frontier of Belgium, threatened an immediate irruption into that kingdom, it was generally supposed, that, as upon former occasions, the road adopted by the invaders would be that of Namur, which, celebrated for the sieges it had formerly undergone, had been dismantled, like the other fortified places in Flanders, by the impolicy of Joseph II. and is now an open town. And I

have heard it warmly maintained by officers of great judgment and experience, that Bonaparte would have had considerable advantages by adopting that line of march in preference to crossing at Charleroi. Probably, however, these were compensated by the superior advantage of appearing on the point where he was least expected. In fact, his first movements seem to have partaken of a surprise.

It is not to be supposed that the Duke of Wellington had neglected, upon this important occasion, the necessary means to procure intelligence,—for skill in obtaining which, as well as for talent in availing himself of the information when gained, he was preeminently distinguished on the Peninsula. But it has been supposed, either that the persons whom he employed as his sources of intelligence, were, upon this occasion, seduced by Bonaparte, or that false information was conveyed to the English general, leading him to believe that such had been the case, and of course inducing him to doubt the reports of his own spies. The story is told both ways; and I need hardly add, that very possibly neither may be true. But I have understood from good authority, that a person, bearing, for Lord Wellington's information, a detailed and authentic account of Bonaparte's plan for the campaign, was actually despatched from Paris in time to have reached Brussels before the commencement of hostilities. This communication was intrusted to a female, who was furnished with a pass from Fouché himself, and who travelled with all despatch in order to accomplish her mission; but, being stop-

ped for two days on the frontiers of France, did not arrive till after the battle of the 16th. This fact, for such I believe it to be, seems to countenance the opinion, that Fouché maintained a correspondence with the allies, and may lead, on the other hand, to suspicion, that though he despatched the intelligence in question, he contrived so to manage, that its arrival should be too late for the purpose which it was calculated to serve. At all events, the appearance of the French upon the Sambre was at Brussels an unexpected piece of intelligence.

The advance of Bonaparte was as bold as it was sudden. The second corps of the French attacked the outposts of the Prussians, drove them in, and continued the pursuit to Marchienne-du-pont, carried that village, secured the bridge, and there crossing the Sambre, advanced towards a large village, called Gosselies, in order to intercept the Prussian garrison of Charleroi, should it retreat in that direction. The light cavalry of the French, following the movement of the second corps as far as Marchienne, turned to their right after crossing that river, swept its left bank as far as Charleroi, which they occupied without giving the Prussians time to destroy the bridge. The third corps d'armée occupied the road to Namur, and the rest of the troops were quartered between Charleroi and Gosselies, in the numerous villages which everywhere occur in that rich and populous country. The Prussian garrison of Charleroi, with the other troops which had sustained this sudden attack, retired in good order upon Fleurus, on

which point the army of Blucher was now concentrating itself.

The advantages which the French reaped by this first success, were some magazines taken at Charleroi, and a few prisoners; but, above all, it contributed to raise the spirits and confirm the confidence of their armies.

Upon the 16th, at three in the morning, the troops which had hitherto remained on the right of the Sambre, crossed that river; and now Bonaparte began to develope the daring plan which he had formed, of attacking, upon one and the same day, two such opponents as Wellington and Blucher.

The left wing of the French army, consisting of the 1st and 2d corps, and of four divisions of cavalry, was intrusted to Ney, who had been suddenly called from a sort of disgraceful retirement to receive this mark of the emperor's confidence. He was commanded to march upon Brussels by Gosselies and Frasnes, overpowering such opposition as might be offered to him in his progress by the Belgian troops, and by the British who might advance to their support.

The centre and right wing of the army, with the imperial guards (who were kept in reserve), marched to the right towards Fleurus against Blucher and the Prussians. They were under the immediate command of Bonaparte himself.

The news of Napoleon's movements in advance, and of the preliminary actions between the French and Prussians, reached Brussels upon the evening of the 15th. The Duke of Wellington, the Prince of Orange, and most other officers of distinction

were attending a ball given on that evening by the Duchess of Richmond. This festivity was soon overclouded.[1] Instant orders were issued that the garrison of Brussels, the nearest disposable force, should move out to meet the approaching enemy; similar orders were issued to the cavalry, artillery, and the guards, who were quartered at Enghien; other troops, cantoned at greater distances, received orders to move to their support.

Our two distinguished Highland corps, the 42d and 92d, were among the first to muster. They had lain in garrison in Brussels during the winter and spring, and their good behaviour had attracted the affection of the inhabitants in an unusual degree. Even while I was there, *Les petits Ecossois*, as they called them, were still the theme of affectionate praise among the Flemings. They were so domesticated in the houses where they were quartered, that it was no uncommon thing to see the Highland soldier taking care of the children, or keeping the shop, of his host. They were now to exhibit themselves in a different character. They

1 [The popular error of the Duke of Wellington having been *surprised*, on the eve of the battle of Waterloo, at a ball given by the Duchess of Richmond at Brussels, was first corrected, on authority, in the "History of Napoleon Bonaparte," which forms a portion of the "Family Library." The Duke had, before one o'clock of that day, received intelligence of Napoleon's decisive operations, and it was intended to put off the ball; but, on reflection, it seemed highly important that the people of Brussels should be kept in ignorance as to the course of events, and the Duke not only desired that the ball should proceed, but the general officers received his commands to appear at it, each taking care to quit the apartment as quietly as possible at ten o'clock, and proceed to join his respective division *en route*.]

in the Place Royale of Brussels, employed as a military hospital, which I was told belonged to a man of rank, who, during the battle of the 18th, believing the victory must rest with Bonaparte, had taken the ill-advised step of joining the French army. But whatever might be the case with some individuals, by far the majority of the inhabitants of every class regarded the success of the French as the most dreadful misfortune which could befall their city, and listened to the distant cannonade, as to sounds upon which the crisis of their fate depended. They were doomed to remain long in uncertainty; for a struggle, on which the fate of Europe hung, was not to be decided in a single day.

Upon the 16th, as I have already mentioned, the left wing of the French, under General Ney, commenced its march for Brussels by the road of Gosselies. At Frasnes they encountered and drove before them some Belgian troops who were stationed in that village. But the gallant Prince of Orange, worthy of his name, of his education under Wellington, and of the rank which he is likely to hold in Europe, was now advancing to the support of his advanced posts, and reinforced them so as to keep the enemy in check.

It was of the utmost importance to maintain the position which was now occupied by the Belgians, being an alignement between the villages of Sart à Mouline and Quatre Bras. The latter farm-house, or village, derives its name from being the point where the highway from Charleroi to Brussels is intersected by another road at nearly right angles.

These roads were both essential to the allies; by the high-road they communicated with Brussels, and by that which intersected it with the right of the Prussian army stationed at St Amand. A large and thick wood called Le Bois de Bossu, skirted the road to Brussels on the right hand of the English position; along the edge of that wood was a hollow way, which might almost be called a ravine; and between the wood and the French position were several fields of rye, which grows in Flanders to an unusual and gigantic height.

In this situation, it became the principal object of the French to secure the wood, from which they might debouche upon the Brussels road. The Prince of Orange made every effort to defend it; but, in spite of his exertions, the Belgians gave way, and the French occupied the disputed post. At this critical moment, the division of Picton, the corps of the Duke of Brunswick, and shortly after the division of the guards from Enghien came up, and entered into action. "What soldiers are those in the wood?" said the Duke of Wellington to the Prince of Orange. "Belgians," answered the Prince, who had not yet learned the retreat of his troops from this important point. "Belgians!" said the Duke, whose eagle eye instantly discerned what had happened, "they are French, and about to debouche on the road; they must instantly be driven out of the wood." This task was committed to General Maitland, with the grenadiers of the Guards, who, after sustaining a destructive fire from an invisible enemy, rushed into the wood with the most determined resolution. The French, who

were hitherto supposed unrivalled in this species of warfare, made every tree, every bush, every ditch, but more especially a small rivulet which ran through the wood, posts of determined and deadly defence, but were pushed from one point to another until they were fairly driven out of the position. Then followed a struggle of a new and singular kind, and which was maintained for a length of time. As often as the British endeavoured to advance from the skirts of the wood, in order to form in front of it, they were charged by the cavalry of the enemy, and compelled to retire. The French then advanced their columns again to force their way into the wood, but were in their turn forced to desist by the heavy fire and threatened charge of the British. And thus there was an alternation of advance and retreat, with very great slaughter on both sides, until, after a conflict of three hours, General Maitland retained undisputed possession of this important post, which commanded the road to Brussels.

Meantime the battle was equally fierce on every other point. Picton's brigade, comprehending the Scotch Royals, 92d, 42d, and 44th regiments, was stationed near the farm-house of Quatre Bras, and was the object of a most destructive fire, rendered more murderous by the French having the advantage of the rising ground; while our soldiers, sunk to the shoulders among the tall rye, could not return the volleys with the same precision of aim. They were next exposed to a desperate charge of the French heavy cavalry, which was resisted by each regiment throwing itself separately into a solid

square. But the approach of the enemy being partly concealed from the British by the nature of the ground, and the height of the rye, the 42d regiment was unable to form a square in the necessary time. Two companies, which were left out of the formation, were swept off and cut to pieces by the cavalry. Their veteran colonel, Macara, was amongst those who fell. The adjutant of the regiment, the last (as was his duty) to retreat within the square, was involved in the charge of the lancers, and only escaped by throwing himself from his horse, and thus rejoining the regiment, which had for some minutes seen him in the utmost peril of death, without the possibility of assisting him. Some of the men stood back to back and maintained an unyielding and desperate conflict with the horsemen who surrounded them, until they were at length cut down. Nothing could be more galling for their comrades than to witness their slaughter, without having the power of giving them assistance. But they adopted the old Highland maxim, "To-day for revenge, and to-morrow for mourning," and received the cuirassiers with so dreadful and murderous a fire, as compelled them to wheel about. These horsemen, however, displayed the most undaunted resolution. After being beaten off in one point, they made a desperate charge down the causeway leading to Brussels, with the purpose of carrying two guns, by which it was defended. But at the moment they approached the guns, a fire of grape-shot was opened upon them; and, at the same time, a body of Highlanders, posted behind the farm-house, flanking their

advance, threw in so heavy a discharge of musketry, that the regiment was in an instant nearly annihilated.

The result of these various attacks was, that the French retreated with great loss, and in great confusion; and many of the fugitives fled as far as Charleroi, spreading the news that the British were in close pursuit. But pursuit was impracticable, for the English cavalry had so far to march, that when they arrived upon the ground night was approaching, and it was impossible for them to be of service. Ney therefore re-established himself in his original position at Frasnes, and the combat died away with night-fall. The British had then leisure to contemplate the results of the day. Several regiments were reduced to skeletons by the number of killed and wounded. Many valuable officers had fallen. Among these were distinguished the gallant Duke of Brunswick,[1] who in degenerate times had remained an unshaken model of ancient German valour and constancy. Colonel Cameron, so often distinguished in Lord Wellington's despatches from Spain, fell while leading the 92d to charge a body of cavalry, supported by infantry.[2] Many

1 ["The Duke of Brunswick received the mortal shot when in the act of lighting a fresh cigar at the pipe of one of his dragoons! In how unheroic an attitude may one meet a heroic death!"—*MS. Journal.*]

2 [——"Through battle's rout and reel
Storm of shot and hedge of steel,
Led the grandson of Lochiel,
Valiant Fassiefern.
Through steel and shot he leads no more,
Low laid 'mid friends' and foemen's gore;
But long his native lake's wild shore,

other regretted names were read on the bloody list. But if it was a day of sorrow, it was one of triumph also.

It is true, that no immediate and decisive advantage resulted from this engagement, farther than as for the present it defeated Napoleon's plan of advancing on Brussels. But it did not fail to inspire the troops engaged with confidence and hope. If, when collected from different quarters, after a toilsome march, and in numbers one half inferior to those of the enemy, they had been able to resist his utmost efforts, what had they not to hope when their forces were concentrated, and when their artillery and cavalry, the want of which had been so severely felt during the whole of that bloody day, should be brought up into line? Meanwhile they enjoyed the most decided proof of victory, for the British army bivouacked upon the ground which had been occupied by the French during the battle, with the strongest hopes that the conflict would be renewed in the morning with the most decisive success. This, however, depended upon the news they should hear from Fleurus, where a furious cannonade had been heard during the whole day, announcing a general action between Napoleon and Prince Marshal Blucher. Even the Duke of Wellington was long ere he learned the result of this engagement, by which his own ulterior measures ne

And Sunart rough, and high Ardgower,
And Morven, long shall tell,
And proud Bennevis hear with awe,
How, upon bloody Quatre Bras,
Brave Cameron heard the wild hurra
Of conquest as he fell!"

SIR WALTER SCOTT'S *Poetical Works*, vol. xi., p 298-9.

cessarily must be regulated. The Prussian officer sent to acquaint him with the intelligence had been made prisoner by the French light troops; and when the news arrived, they bore such a cloudy aspect as altogether destroyed the agreeable hopes which the success at Quatre Bras had induced the army to entertain.

But pledged as I am to give you a detailed account of this brief campaign, I must reserve the battle of Ligny to another occasion. Meanwhile, I am ever sincerely yours,

PAUL

LETTER VII.

PAUL TO THE MAJOR—IN CONTINUATION.

BATTLE OF LIGNY.

Bonaparte's Plan for Attacking Blucher—Blucher's Position—Number of Troops on both Sides—Mutual hostility of the Prussians and the French—The two Armies join Battle—Vicissitudes of the Contest—Storming of St Amand—Taking of Ligny—Charge of the Imperial Guards—Charge of the French Cavalry—Blucher's Horse shot—Repulse of the French Cavalry—Prussians Retreat—Concentration of the Prussian Army at Wavre—Loss of the Prussians—British Army Retreats—Bonaparte resolves to turn his whole Force against the British—Retreat of the British—Pursuit of the French—Bad state of the roads—French Cavalry checked in two attacks—British Army retire upon Waterloo—Headquarters of the Duke of Wellington—Headquarters of Bonaparte—Storminess of the Night—Melancholy Reflections of the British—Triumphant Confidence of the French—Remarks on Bonaparte's Plan of Attack.

WHEN Bonaparte moved with his centre and right wing against Blucher, he certainly conceived that he left to Ney a more easy task than his own; and that the Maréchal would find no difficulty in pushing his way to Brussels, or near it, before the

English army could be concentrated in sufficient force to oppose him. To himself he reserved the task of coping with Blucher, and by his overthrow cutting off all communication between the Prussian and British armies, and compelling each to seek safety in isolated and unconnected movements.

The Prussian veteran was strongly posted to receive the enemy, whom upon earth he hated most. His army occupied a line where three villages, built upon broken and unequal ground, served each as a separate redoubt, defended by infantry, and well furnished with artillery. The village of St Amand was occupied by his right wing, his centre was posted at Ligny, and his left at Sombref. All these hamlets are strongly built, and contain several houses, with large court-yards and orchards, each of which is capable of being converted into a station of defence. The ground behind these villages forms an amphitheatre of some elevation, before which runs a deep ravine, edged by straggling thickets of trees. The villages were in front of the ravine; and masses of infantry were stationed behind each, destined to reinforce the defenders as occasion required.

In this strong position Blucher had assembled three corps of his army, amounting to 80,000 men. But the fourth corps, commanded by Bulow, (a general distinguished in the campaign of 1814,) being in distant cantonments between Liege and Hannut, had not yet arrived at the point of concentration. The force of the assailants is stated in the Prussian despatches at 130,000 men. But as Ney had at least 30,000 soldiers under him at

Quatre Bras, it would appear that the troops under Bonaparte's immediate command at the battle of Ligny, even including a strong reserve, which consisted of the first entire division, could not exceed 100,000 men. The forces, therefore, actually engaged on both sides, might be nearly equal. They were equal also in courage and in mutual animosity.

The Prussians of our time will never forget, or forgive, the series of dreadful injuries inflicted by the French upon their country after the defeat of Jena. The plunder of their peaceful hamlets, with every inventive circumstance which the evil passions of lust, rapine, and cruelty could suggest; the murder of the father, or the husband, because "the *pekin* looked dangerous," when he beheld his property abandoned to rapine, his wife, or daughters, to violation, and his children to wanton slaughter; such were the tales which the Prussian Land-wehr told over their watch-fires to whet each other's appetite to revenge. The officers and men of rank thought of the period when Prussia had been blotted out of the book of nations, her queen martyred by studied and reiterated insult, until she carried her sorrows to the grave, and her king only permitted to retain the name of a sovereign to increase his disgrace as a bondsman. The successful campaign of 1814 was too stinted a draught for their thirst of vengeance, and the hour was now come when they hoped for its amplest gratification.

The French had, also, their grounds of personal animosity, not less stimulating. Those very Prussians, to whom (such was their mode of stating

the account) the emperor's generosity had left the name of independence, when a single word could have pronounced them a conquered province; those Prussians, admitted to be companions in arms to the victors, had been the first to lift the standard of rebellion against them, when the rage of the elements had annihilated the army with which Napoleon invaded Russia. They had done more: they had invaded the sacred territory of France; defeated her armies upon her own soil; and contributed chiefly to the hostile occupation of her capital. They were commanded by Blucher, the inveterate foe of the French name and empire, whom no defeat could ever humble, and no success could mitigate. Even when the Treaty of Paris was received by the other distinguished statesmen and commanders of the allies as a composition advantageous for all sides, it was known that this veteran had expressed his displeasure at the easy terms on which France was suffered to escape from the conflict. Amid the general joy and congratulation, he retained the manner (in the eyes of the Parisians) of a gloomy malcontent. A Frenchman, somewhat acquainted with our literature, described to me the Prussian general, as bearing upon that occasion the mien and manner of Dryden's spectre-knight:—

> "Stern look'd the fiend, and frustrate of his will,
> Not half sufficed, and greedy yet to kill."

And now this inveterate enemy was before them, leading troops, animated by his own sentiments, and forming the vanguard of the immense armies, which unless checked by decisive defeat, were

about to overwhelm France, and realize those scenes of vengeance which had been in the preceding year so singularly averted.

Fired by these sentiments of national hostility, the ordinary rules of war, those courtesies and acts of lenity which on other occasions afford some mitigation of its horrors, were renounced upon both sides. The Prussians declared their purpose to give and receive no quarter. Two of the French divisions hoisted the black flag, as an intimation of the same intention; and it is strongly affirmed that they gave a more sanguinary proof of their mortal hatred by mutilating and cutting off the ears of the prisoners who fell into their hands at crossing the Sambre. With such feelings towards each other, the two armies joined battle.

The engagement commenced at three in the afternoon, by a furious cannonade, under cover of which the third corps of the French army, commanded by Vandamme, attacked the village of St Amand. They were received by the Prussians with the most determined resistance, in despite of which they succeeded in carrying the village at the point of the bayonet, and established themselves in the church and churchyard. The Prussians made the most desperate efforts to recover possession of this village, which was the key of their right wing. Blucher put himself at the head of a battalion in person, and impelled them on the French with such success, that one end of the village was again occupied; and the Prussians regained possession of that part of the heights behind it, which, in consequence of Vandamme's success, they had

been obliged to abandon. The village of Ligny, attacked and defended with the same fury and inveteracy, was repeatedly lost and regained, either party being alternately reinforced from masses of infantry, disposed behind that part of the village which they respectively occupied. Several houses enclosed with courtyards, according to the Flemish fashion, formed each a separate redoubt, which was furiously assailed by the one party, and obstinately made good by the other. It is impossible to conceive the fury with which the troops on both sides were animated. Each soldier appeared to be avenging his own personal quarrel; and the slaughter was in proportion to the length and obstinacy of a five hours' combat, fought hand to hand within the crowded and narrow streets of a village. There was also a sustained cannonade on both sides, through the whole of the afternoon. But in this species of warfare the Prussians sustained a much heavier loss than their antagonists, their masses being drawn up in an exposed situation upon the ridge and sides of the heights behind the villages, while those of the French were sheltered by the winding hollows of the lower grounds.

While this desperate contest continued, Bonaparte apparently began to doubt of its ultimate success. To ensure the storming of St Amand, he ordered the first corps of infantry, which was stationed near Frasnes, with a division of the second corps commanded by Girard, and designed to be a reserve either to his own army or to that of Marshal Ney, to move to the right to assist in the attack. Of this movement Ney complained heavily

afterwards in a letter to Fouché, as depriving him of the means of ensuring a victory at Quatre Bras.

The reinforcement, as it happened, was unnecessary, so far as the first corps was concerned; for about seven o'clock Vandamme had, after reiterated efforts, surmounted the resistance of the Prussians at St Amand; and Girard had obtained possession of Ligny. Sombref, upon the left of the Prussian line, was still successfully defended by the Saxon general, Thielman, against Maréchal Grouchy; and the Prussians, though driven from the villages in front of the amphitheatre of hills, still maintained their alignement upon the heights themselves, impatiently expecting to be succoured, either by the English, or by their own fourth division under Bulow. But the Duke of Wellington was himself actively engaged at Quatre Bras; and Bulow had found it impossible to surmount the difficulties attending a long march through bad roads and a difficult country. In the meanwhile Bonaparte brought this dreadful engagement to a decision by one of those skilful and daring manœuvres which characterised his tactics.

Being now possessed of the village of Ligny, which fronted the centre of the Prussian line, he concentrated upon that point the imperial guards, whom he had hitherto kept in reserve. Eight battalions of this veteran and distinguished infantry, thrown into one formidable column, supported by four squadrons of cavalry, two regiments of cuirassiers, and the horse-grenadiers of the guard, traversed the village of Ligny, now in flames, at the

pas de charge, threw themselves into the ravine which separates the village from the heights, and began to ascend them, under a dreadful fire of grape and musketry from the Prussians. They sustained this murderous discharge with great gallantry, and, advancing against the Prussian line, made such an impression upon the masses of which it consisted, as threatened to break through the centre of their army, and thus cut off the communication between the two wings; while the French cavalry, at the same time, charged and drove back that of the Prussians.

In this moment of consternation, the cause of Europe had nearly suffered a momentous loss in the death or captivity of the indomitable Blucher. The gallant veteran had himself headed an unsuccessful charge against the French cavalry; and his horse being shot under him in the retreat, both the fliers and pursuers passed over him as he lay on the ground; an adjutant threw himself down beside his general, to share his fate; and the first use which the Prince-Marshal made of his recovered recollection was, to conjure his faithful attendant rather to shoot him than to permit him to fall alive into the hands of the French. Meantime, the Prussian cavalry had rallied, charged, and in their turn repulsed the French, who again galloped past the Prussian general, as he lay on the ground covered with the cloak of the adjutant, with the same precipitation as in their advance. The general was then disengaged and remounted, and proceeded to organize the retreat, which was now become a measure of indispensable necessity.

The Prussian artillery, being disposed along the front of an extended line, could not be easily withdrawn, and several pieces fell into the hands of the French. Blucher's official despatch limits the number of guns thus lost to fifteen, which Bonaparte extends to fifty. But the infantry, retiring regularly, and in masses impenetrable to the cavalry of the pursuers, amply preserved that high character of courage and discipline, which, in the campaigns of the preceding year, had repeatedly enabled them to convert retreat and disorder of one day into advance and victory upon the next. In their retreat, which they continued during the night, they took the direction of Tilly; and in the next morning were followed by General Thielman, with the left wing, who, after evacuating the village of Sombref, which he had maintained during the whole preceding day, formed the rear-guard of the Prince-Marshal's army. Being now at length joined by the fourth corps, under General Bulow, the Prussian army was once more concentrated in the neighbourhood of the village of Wavre, ten miles behind the scene of their former defeat; and the utmost exertions were used by Blucher, and the officers under him to place it in a condition for renewing the conflict.

The carnage of the Prussians in this unsuccessful battle was very great. I have heard it estimated at twenty thousand men, killed, wounded, and prisoners, being one-fourth part of their whole army. Bonaparte, however, only rates it at fifteen thousand *hors de combat;* an enormous loss, especially considering that, owing to the inveteracy

of the combat, and the steady valour displayed by the vanquished in their retreat, there were hardly any prisoners taken.

The events of the 16th had a material influence on the plans of the generals on either side. While the Duke of Wellington was proposing to follow up his advantage at Quatre Bras, by attacking Ney at Frasnes, he received, on the morning of the 17th, the news that Blucher had been defeated on the preceding day, and was in full retreat. This left the Duke no option but to fall back to such a corresponding position as might maintain his lateral communication with the Prussian right wing; since, to have remained in advance, would have given Bonaparte an opportunity either to have placed his army betwixt those of England and Prussia, or, at his choice, to have turned his whole force against the Duke's army, which was inferior in numbers. The English general accordingly resolved upon retreating towards Brussels; a movement which he accomplished in the most perfect order, the rear being protected by the cavalry under the gallant Earl of Uxbridge.[1]

Meantime, Bonaparte had also taken his resolution. The defeat of the Prussians had placed it in his option to pursue them with his whole army, excepting those troops under Ney, who were in front of the Duke of Wellington. But this would have been to abandon Ney to almost certain destruction; since, if that general had been unable, on the preceding day, to make any impression on the

[1] [Created, in 1815, Marquis of Anglesea.]

van of the British army alone, it was scarce possible he could withstand them, when supported by their main body, and joined by reinforcements of every kind. In the supposed event of Ney's defeat, Bonaparte's rear would have been exposed to a victorious English army, while he knew, by repeated experience, how speedily and effectually Blucher could rally his Prussians, even after a severe defeat. He made it his choice, therefore, to turn his whole force against the English, leaving only Grouchy and Vandamme, with about twenty-five thousand men, to hang upon the rear of Blucher; and by pursuing his retreat from Sombref to Wavre, to occupy his attention, and prevent his attempting to take a share in the unexpected action with the British.

Napoleon probably expected to find the English army upon the ground which it had occupied during the 16th. But the movement of his own forces from St Amand and Ligny to Frasnes, had occupied a space of time which was not left unemployed by the Duke of Wellington. The retreat had already commenced, and the position at Quatre Bras was, about eleven in the forenoon, only occupied by a strong rear-guard, destined to protect the retrograde movement of the British general. Bonaparte put his troops in motion to pursue his retiring enemy. The day was stormy and rainy in the extreme; and the roads, already broken up by the English artillery in their advance and retreat, were very nearly impassable. The cavalry, whose duty it became to press upon the rear of the English, were obliged to march through fields of

standing corn, which being reduced to swamps by the wetness of the season, rendered rapid movement impossible. This state of the weather and roads was of no small advantage to the British army, who had to defile through the narrow streets of the village of Genappe, and over the bridge which there crosses a small river, in the very face of the pursuing enemy. Their cavalry once or twice attacked the rear-guard, but received so severe a check from the Life Guards and Oxford Blues, that they afterwards left the march undisturbed. I am assured, that the Duke of Wellington, in passing Genappe, expressed his surprise that he had been allowed to pass through that narrow defile, unharassed by attack and interruption, and asserted his belief, founded upon that circumstance, that Napoleon did not command in person the pursuing divisions of the French army. A French officer, to whom I mentioned this circumstance, accounted for this apparent want of activity, by alleging the heavy loss sustained upon the 16th, in the battles of Quatre Bras and Ligny; the necessary disorganization of the French cavalry after two such severe actions; the stormy state of the weather upon the 17th, and the impracticability of the roads for the movements of the cavalry. You, as a military critic, will be best judge how far this defence is available. I notice the same observation in an Account of the Battle of Waterloo, by a British Officer on the Staff.[1]

With little further interruption on the part of

[1] Published by Ridgway, Piccadilly.

the enemy, the British army retired upon the ever-memorable field of Waterloo, and there took up a position upon the road to Brussels, which I shall endeavour to describe more fully in my next Letter. The Duke had caused a plan of this, and other military positions in the neighbourhood of Brussels, to be made some time before by Colonel Carmichael Smith, the chief engineer. He now called for that sketch, and, with the assistance of the regretted Sir William de Lancy and Colonel Smith, made his dispositions for the momentous events of next day. The plan itself, a relic so precious, was rendered yet more so, by being found in the breast of Sir William de Lancy's coat, when he fell, and stained with the blood of that gallant officer. It is now in the careful preservation of Colonel Carmichael Smith, by whom it was originally sketched.

When the Duke of Wellington had made his arrangements for the night, he established his headquarters at a petty inn in the small village of Waterloo, about a mile in the rear of the position. The army slept upon their arms upon the summit of a gentle declivity, chiefly covered with standing corn.

The French, whose forces were gradually coming up during the evening, occupied a ridge nearly opposite to the position of the English army. The villages in the rear of that rising ground were also filled with the soldiers of their numerous army. Bonaparte established his headquarters at Planchenoit, a small village in the rear of the position.

Thus arranged, both generals and their respective armies waited the arrival of morning, and the

events it was to bring. The night, as if the elements meant to match their fury with that which was preparing for the morning, was stormy in the extreme, accompanied by furious gusts of wind, heavy bursts of rain, continued and vivid flashes of lightning, and the loudest thunder our officers had ever heard. Both armies had to sustain this tempest in the exposed situation of an open bivouac, without means either of protection or refreshment. But though these hardships were common to both armies, yet, (as was the case previous to the battle of Agincourt,) the moral feelings of the English army were depressed below their ordinary tone, and those of the French exalted to a degree of confidence and presumption unusual even to the soldiers of that nation.

The British could not help reflecting, that the dear-bought success at Quatre Bras, while it had cost so many valuable lives, had produced, in appearance at least, no corresponding result: a toilsome advance and bloody action had been followed by a retreat equally laborious to the soldier; and the defeat of the Prussians, which was now rumoured with the usual allowance of exaggeration, had left Bonaparte at liberty to assail them separately, and with his whole force, excepting such small proportion as might be necessary to continue the pursuit of their defeated and dispirited allies. If to this it was added, that their ranks contained many thousand foreigners, on whose faith the British could not implicitly depend, it must be owned there was sufficient scope for melancholy reflections. To balance these, remained their con-

fidence in their commander, their native undaunted courage, and a stern resolution to discharge their duty, and leave the result to Providence.

The French, on the other hand, had forgotten, in their success at Ligny, their failure at Quatre Bras, or, if they remembered it, their miscarriage was ascribed to treachery; and it was said that Bourmont and other officers had been tried by a military commission and shot, for having, by their misconduct, occasioned the disaster. This rumour, which had no foundation but in the address with which Bonaparte could apply a salve to the wounded vanity of his soldiers, was joined to other exulting considerations. Admitting the partial success of Wellington, the English Duke, they said, commanded but the right wing of the Prussian army, and had, in fact, shared in Blucher's defeat, as he himself virtually acknowledged, by imitating his retreat. All, therefore, was glow and triumph. The Prussians were annihilated, the British defeated, "the Great Lord"[1] astounded. Such were literally the reports transmitted to Paris, and given to the French public. There is no reason in the present instance to suspect, that the writers of these gasconades were guilty of intentional exaggeration. No one supposed the English would halt, or make head, until they reached their vessels; no one doubted that the Belgian troops would join the Emperor in a mass; it would have been disaffection to have supposed there lay any impediment in their next morning's march to Brussels; and all

[1] [This was the common appellation of Lord Wellington among the Spaniards during the Peninsular War.]

affected chiefly to regret the tempestuous night, as it afforded to the despairing English the means of retiring unmolested. Bonaparte himself shared, or affected to share, these sentiments; and when the slow and gloomy dawning of the morning of the 18th of June showed him his enemies, still in possession of the heights which they occupied overnight, and apparently determined to maintain them, he could not suppress his satisfaction, but exclaimed, while he stretched his arm towards their position with a motion as if to grasp his prey, *Je les tiens donc, ces Anglois !*

The exultation of the French was mixed, according to their custom, with many a scurril jest at the expense of their enemies. The death of the Duke of Brunswick was the subject of much pleasantry among such of the French officers as sought to make their court to Jerome, the ex-king of Westphalia. To please this phantom monarch, they ridiculed the fatality which always, they said, placed these unlucky Dukes of Brunswick in concurrence with the conqueror of their states, and condemned them successively to perish as it were by his hand. The national dress of our poor Highlanders, whose bodies were found lying in the lines which they had occupied in the field of Quatre Bras, furnished more good jests than I care to record. But, as I heard a Frenchman just now observe, "*Il rit bien, qui rit le dernier.*"

Before entering upon such particulars as I can collect of the battle of Waterloo, let me notice your criticism upon the affairs of the 16th. You say, first, that Bonaparte ought not to have attacked

both the English and Prussian armies on the same day, and you call my attention to the argument detailed in Maréchal Ney's letter to Fouché. And, secondly, you are of opinion, that, having defeated the Prussians at Ligny, Napoleon should have pursued the routed army of Blucher with his whole cavalry at least, and rendered it impossible for him to rally sooner than under the walls of Maestricht. Such, you say, is the opinion of all military judges in our neighbourhood, by which I know you mean all our friends with blue coats and red collars, whether half-pay captains, ex-officers of volunteers, commanders of local militia, or deputy-lieutenants. "Never a man's thought in the world keeps the road-way better than thine," my dear Major; but in despite of this unanimous verdict against the ex-Emperor, I will venture to move for a writ of error.

Upon the first count of the indictment, be pleased to reflect, that Bonaparte's game was at best a difficult one, and that he could embrace no course which was not exposed to many hazards. It is not the ultimate success, or miscarriage, of his plan, by which we ought to judge of its propriety, but the rational prospects which it held out before being carried into execution. Now be it remembered, that, upon the 16th, Blucher's army was already concentrated at Ligny, while that of Lord Wellington was only moving up in detail to Quatre Bras. Maréchal Ney would scarcely have recommended to Napoleon to move straight towards Brussels by Quatre Bras and Genappe, leaving upon his right, and eventually in his rear, an army of 80,000 Prussians, expecting hourly to be joined by Bulow

with 20,000 more, altogether disengaged and unoccupied. The consequence of such a movement must necessarily have been, that, menaced by the enemy's whole force, the Duke of Wellington might have relinquished thoughts of collecting his army in a post so much in advance as Quatre Bras; but a concentration upon Waterloo would have been the obvious alternative; and if the Emperor had advanced to that point and attacked the English without their receiving any assistance from the untouched army of the Prussians, we must suppose Blucher less active in behalf of his allies when at the head of an entire army, than he proved himself to be when commanding one which had sustained a recent defeat. In a word, if left unattacked, or masked only by a force inferior to their own, the Prussians were in a situation instantly to have become the assailants; and, therefore, it seems that Bonaparte acted wisely in sending, in the first instance, the greater part of his army against that body of his enemies which had already combined its forces, while he might reasonably hope, that the divisions under Ney's command could dispose of the British troops as they came up to the field of battle wearied and in detail. In fact, his scheme had, in its material points, complete success, for Napoleon did defeat the Prussians; and, by his success against them, compelled the English to retreat, and gained an opportunity of attacking them with his whole force in a battle, where the scale more than once inclined to his side. If, in the conjoined assault of the 16th, Ney failed in success over an enemy far inferior in numbers, it can only

be accounted for by the superior talents of the English general, and the greater bravery of the soldiers whom he commanded. Something like a conscious feeling of this kind seems to lurk at the bottom of the maréchal's statement, who scarce pardons the emperor for being successful upon a day on which he was himself defeated.

The manner in which Ney complains of being deprived of the assistance of the first brigade, held hitherto in reserve, between his right and the left wing of Napoleon, and withdrawn, as he alleges, to the assistance of the latter just when, on his side, "victory was not doubtful," savours of the same peevish criticism. Napoleon sent for these troops when their aid appeared essential to carry the village of St Amand, and thereby to turn the right flank of the Prussians, and he restored them to their original position the instant he perceived a possibility of carrying his point without them. Surely more could not have been expected in the circumstances. Of the tone the maréchal assumes to his fallen master, and the reproaches which he permits himself to cast upon him, I will only say, in the words of Wolsey,

> "Within these forty hours Surrey had better
> Have burned his tongue than said so."

Upon the other point of censure it is more difficult to give a satisfactory explanation. The French seem to have considered the Battle of Ligny as being of a character less decisive than complete victory, and a consciousness of the unbroken force of the retiring enemy certainly checked the vivacity of the pursuit. The French carried the positions

of the Prussians with great slaughter ; but the precipitate retreat, and the numerous prisoners announced in Bonaparte's bulletin, are now universally allowed to be apocryphal. Blucher, whose open and frank avowal of the defeat he sustained claims credit for the rest of his narrative, assures us, that the Prussian army was again formed within a quarter of a league from the field of battle, and presented such a front to the enemy as deterred him from attempting a pursuit. We ought therefore to conclude, (paying always the necessary deference to Bonaparte's military skill,) that although the Prussians had been driven from their positions, yet their retreat must have been conducted with such order, that no advantage would have resulted from pursuing them with a small force, while the necessity of making a movement with his main body to the left, in order to repair the disaster sustained by Ney, rendered it impossible for Napoleon to press upon their retreat with an overwhelming superiority of numbers.

These reflections, which I hazard in profound submission to your experience, close what occurs upon the important events of the 16th and 17th days of June last. Ever, my dear Major, &c.

PAUL.

LETTER VIII.

TO THE SAME.

BATTLE OF WATERLOO

Field of Waterloo Described—Disposition of the British Forces—Valley between the Armies—Hougoumont—Position of the French Army—Dawn of the 18th—Preparations of the French—Communication between the British and Prussians—Commencement of the Battle—Spot where Bonaparte was posted—Advance of French Cavalry—Determination of the British Troops—First Attack of the French—Their partial Success—Defence of Hougoumont—Renewed attack upon it—Resistance of the Black Brunswickers—Formation of the Regiment into Squares—Attack upon Mount St John—Inefficiency of Light Cavalry—Temporary Superiority of the French—Charge of the Heavy Brigade—Instance of Military Indifference—Feats of Personal Valour—Corporal Shaw—Sir John Elley—French Cavalry beaten off—Alarm at Brussels on the arrival of French Prisoners—Contest renewed on the Right Wing—Charges of French Cavalry—Courage of Individual Frenchmen—Coolness of our Soldiers—Retreat of a Belgian Regiment—Cowardice of the Hanoverian Hussars—The Centre and Left again attacked—La Haye Sainte stormed—Dreadful Carnage at Hougoumont—Burning of the Chateau—The position gallantly defended—Duke of Wellington—He encourages the Troops—Losses among his Staff—Sir W. Ponsonby—Sir A. Gordon—Lieut.-Col. Canning—Inces-

Along this eminence the British forces were disposed in two lines. The second, which lay behind the brow of the hill, was, in some degree, sheltered from the enemy's fire. The first line, consisting of the *élite* of the infantry, occupied the crest of the ridge, and were on the left partly defended by a long hedge and ditch, which, running in a straight line from the hamlet of Mount St John towards the village of Ohain, gives name to two farm-houses. The first, which is situated in advance of the hedge, and at the bottom of the declivity, is called La Haye Sainte (the holy hedge); the other, placed at the extremity of the fence, is called Ter la Haye. The ground at Ter la Haye becomes woody and broken, so that it afforded a strong point at which to terminate the British line upon the left. A road runs from Ter la Haye to Ohain and the woody passes of St Lambert, through which the Duke of Wellington kept up a communication by his left with the Prussian army. The centre of the English army occupied the village of Mount St John, on the middle of the ridge, just where the great causeway from Brussels divides into two roads, one of which branches off to Nivelles, and the other continues the straight line to Charleroi. A strong advanced post of Hanoverian sharp-shooters occupied the house and farmyard of La Haye Sainte, situated in advance upon the Charler... ...d just at the bottom of the hill. ...ish army, extending along the ...led and protected the Nivelles ...sures of Hougoumont, and, ...rds, rested its extreme right

upon a deep ravine. Advanced posts from thence occupied the village called Braine la Leude,[1] on which point there was no engagement. The ground in front of the British point sloped easily down into lower ground, forming a sort of valley, not a level plain, but a declivity varied by many gentle sweeps and hollows, which, though quite dry, seem as if formed by the course of a river. The ground then ascends in the same manner to a ridge opposite to that of Mount St John, and running parallel to it at the distance of twelve or fourteen hundred yards. This was the position of the enemy. It is in some points nearer, and in others more distant from the heights, or ridge, of Mount St John, according as the valley between them is of greater or less breadth.

The valley between the two ridges is entirely open and unenclosed, and on that memorable day bore a tall and strong crop of corn. But in the centre of the valley, about half way betwixt the two ridges, and situated considerably to the right of the English centre, was the Chateau de Goumont, or Hougoumont. This is (or rather *was*) a gentleman's house of the old Flemish architecture, having a tower, and, as far as I can judge from its ruins, a species of battlement. It was surrounded on one side by a large farm-yard, and on the other opened to a garden divided by alleys in the Dutch taste, and fenced by a brick wall, and an exterior hedge and ditch. The whole was encircled by an open grove of tall trees, covering a space of about

[1] Or Braine the Free, to distinguish it from Braine le Compte, or Braine belonging to the count.

three or four acres, without any underwood. This chateau, with the advantages afforded by its wood and gardens, formed a strong *point d'appui* to the British right wing. In fact, while this point was maintained, it must have been difficult for the French to have made a serious attack upon the extremity of our right wing. On the other hand, had they succeeded in carrying Hougoumont, our line must have been confined to the heights, extending towards Merke Braine, which rather recede from the field, and would have been in consequence much limited, and crowded in its movements. As far as I understand the order of battle, the British line upon this right wing at the commencement of the action, rather presented the convex segment of a circle to the enemy; but as repeated repulses obliged the French to give ground, the extreme right was thereby enabled to come gradually round, and the curve being reversed, became concave, enfilading the field of battle and the high-road from Brussels to Charleroi, which intersects it.[1]

Such was the position of the British army on this memorable morning. That of the French is less capable of distinct description. Their troops had bivouacked on the field, or occupied the vil-

[1] ["*As a plain*, Waterloo seems marked out for the scene *of some great action*, though this may be mere imagination. I have viewed with attention those of Platea, Troy, Mantinea, Leuctra, Chæronea, and Marathon; and the field around Mont St Jean and Hougoumont appears to want little but a better cause, and that undefinable but impressive halo which the lapse of ages throws around a consecrated spot, to vie in interest with any or all of these, except, perhaps, the last mentioned."—BYRON.]

lages behind the ridge of La Belle Alliance. Their general had the choice of his mode of attack upon the English position, a word which, in this case, can only be used in a general sense, as a situation for an order of battle, but not in any respect as denoting ground which was naturally strong, or easily defended.

The imperfect dawn of the 18th was attended by the same broken and tempestuous weather, by which the night had been distinguished. But the interval of rest, such as it was, had not been neglected by the British, who had gained time to clean their arms, distribute ammunition, and prepare every thing for the final shock of battle. Provisions had also been distributed to the troops, most of whom had thus the means of breakfasting with some comfort.

Early in the morning numerous bodies of French cavalry began to occupy all the ridge of La Belle Alliance, opposite to that of Mount St John, and as our horse were held in readiness to encounter them, an engagement was expected between the cavalry of both armies, which our infantry supposed they would only view in the capacity of spectators. The desertion of a French officer of cuirassiers, attached to the party of Lewis XVIII., conveyed other information; he assured Lord Hill, and subsequently the Duke of Wellington, that a general attack was intended, which would commence on our right by a combined force of infantry and cavalry.

In the meanwhile, the communication between our army and the Prussians by our left flank had

been uninterrupted. An officer of engineers, who was despatched so early as four in the morning, accompanied Bulow's division, already on march to our assistance, struggling with the defiles of St Lambert, through roads which were rendered worse and worse by every succeeding regiment and brigade of artillery. One sentiment, this gentleman assured me, seemed unanimous among the Prussians—an eager and enthusiastic desire to press forward to obtain their share of the glories and dangers of the day, and to revenge their losses upon the 16th. The common soldiers cheered him and his companion as they passed. "Keep your ground, brave English!" was the universal exclamation, in German, and in such broken English or French as they found to express themselves—"Only keep your ground till we come up!"—and they used every effort accordingly to get into the field. But the movement was a lateral one, made across a country naturally deep and broken, rendered more so by the late heavy rains; and, on the whole, so unfit for the passage of a large body of troops, with their cavalry, artillery, &c., that even these officers, well mounted as they were, and eager to make their report to the department from which they had been despatched, did not reach the field of battle till after eleven o'clock.

The engagement had already commenced. It is said Bonaparte fired the first gun with his own hand, which is at least doubtful. But it is certain that he was in full view of the field when the battle began, and remained upon it till no choice was left him but that of death or rapid flight. His first post

was a high wooden observatory, which had been constructed when a trigonometrical survey of the country was made by order of the King of the Netherlands some weeks before. But he afterwards removed to the high grounds in front of La Belle Alliance, and finally to the foot of the slope upon the road to Brussels. He was attended by his staff, and squadrons of *service* destined to protect his person. Soult, Ney, and other officers of distinction, commanded under him, but he issued all orders and received all reports in person.

The clouds of cavalry, which had mustered thicker and thicker upon the skirts of the horizon in the line of La Belle Alliance, began now to advance forward. One of our best and bravest officers confessed to me a momentary sinking of the heart when he looked round him, considered how small was the part of our force properly belonging to Britain, and recollected the disadvantageous and discouraging circumstances under which even our own soldiers laboured. A slight incident reassured him. An aid-de-camp galloped up, and, after delivering his instructions, cautioned the battalion of the Guards, along whom he rode, to reserve their fire till the enemy were within a short distance. "Never mind us," answered a veteran guards-man from the ranks,—"never mind us, sir; *we know our duty.*" From that moment my gallant friend said, that he knew the hearts of the men were in the right trim, and that though they might leave their bodies on the spot, they would never forfeit their honour. A few minutes afterwards the unparalleled conflict began

The first attack of the French, as had been announced by the royalist officer, was directed towards our right wing, embracing the post of Hougoumont and the high road to Nivelles. A glance at any plan of this ground will show, that occupying the latter with artillery, would have enabled the French to have pushed forward to the very centre of our line, especially if Hougoumont could have been carried about the same time.

Under the eye of Bonaparte himself, who was then stationed on the ridge to the left of La Belle Alliance, the combinations for the attack were made with great skill and rapidity, and so completely concealed from our troops by the nature of the ground, that just before it took place, the cavalry on our extreme right expected orders to advance against some squadrons which showed themselves, as in the act of deploying towards Braine la Leude. But the enemy's motions were directed towards a more vital point.

About half-past eleven o'clock, the whole of the French second corps d'armée, amounting to three divisions, each consisting of 10,000 men, commenced a most desperate attack upon the post of Hougoumont. It was defended by the light companies of the Guards, who were stationed in the chateau and the garden, partly in the wood, in conjunction with a corps of sharpshooters, chiefly Nassau troops. The defence was supported by the whole second brigade of Guards under Major-General Byng, placed on a rising ground in the rear so as to preserve the power of reinforcing the garrison.

The first division of the French, commanded by Jerome Bonaparte, commenced the assault, which, after a short but violent struggle, terminated in their retreating with great loss. But the attack was almost instantly renewed with incredible fury by the second division, commanded by General Foy. The fury of their onset was such, that the sharpshooters of Nassau Ussingen, to whom the grove of Hougoumont had been confided, abandoned that part of the post, and the chateau itself must have been carried, but for the stubborn and desperate courage of that detachment of the Guards to whom the defence was intrusted. A French officer, followed by a few men, actually forced his way into the courtyard of the chateau, but all were there bayoneted. Colonel Macdonnell, the brother of our Highland Chief Glengarry, was obliged to fight hand to hand among the assailants, and was indebted to personal strength no less than courage for his success in the perilous duty of shutting the gates of the courtyard against the enemy. The Spanish general, Don Miguel Alava, and his aides-de-camp, exerted themselves to rally the scattered sharpshooters of Nassau, and Don Nicholas de Mennuisir was particularly distinguished by his activity. But they passed the right of our troops in great disorder, their faces and hands blackened with smoke and powder, and showing yet sterner signs of the conflict in which they had been engaged, and to the furies of which they seemed unwilling again to commit themselves. "What would the Spaniards have done," said a prince distinguished for his own personal spirit and courage, as well

as for his experience in the Peninsular war,—"What would the Spaniards have done, Don Miguel, in a fire like that of Waterloo?"—"At least, sir," retorted the Castilian, "they would not, like some of your father's subjects, have fled without seeing their enemy!"—By the rout of these light troops, and the consequent occupation of the wood by the French, Hougoumont was, for great part of the action, completely an invested and besieged post, indebted for its security to the walls and deep and strong ditches with which the garden and orchard were surrounded, but much more to the valiant and indomitable spirits of those by whom these defences were maintained. The French have since asserted, that their ill success was in great measure owing to their ignorance, that the exterior hedge of the orchard masked a strong and thick garden wall, so that those who surmounted the one obstacle were suddenly overwhelmed by the fire from this second defence. When, however, it is remembered that Bonaparte, who himself superintended the attack, had by his side a person born and bred within half a mile of the chateau, it seems very unlikely that he should have omitted to make himself acquainted with the local means of defence. It was currently reported, that, during the attack, the bailiff or steward of the proprietor fired more than once from the summit of the tower upon the British, by whom the court and garden were defended, and that he was at length discovered and shot. At any rate, the place was most furiously assailed from without, and as resolutely defended, the garrison firing through the holes which they knocked

out in the garden walls, and through the hedge of the orchard; and the assailants making the most desperate attempts to carry the post, but in vain. About one o'clock the wood was regained by six companies of the Guards under Colonel Hepburn, superseding Lord Saltoun, who had hitherto commanded in the wood, while Colonels Woodford and Macdonnell directed the defence of the buildings and garden. The attack of the Guards under Colonel Hepburn drove back Foy's division with immense loss, again occupied the wood, and reinforced the little garrison in the chateau.

Still, however, Hougoumont being in some degree insulated, and its defenders no longer in direct or undisturbed communication with the rest of the British army, the French cavalry were enabled to pour round it in great strength to the attack of the British right wing. The light troops, who were in advance of the British line, were driven in by the fury of this general charge, and the foreign cavalry, who ought to have supported them, gave way on all sides. The first forces who offered a steady resistance were the Black Brunswick infantry. They were drawn up in squares, as most of the British forces were, during this memorable action, each regiment forming a square by itself, not quite solid, but nearly so, the men being drawn up several files deep. The distance between these masses afforded space enough to draw up the battalions in line when they should be ordered to deploy, and the regiments were posted with reference to each other much like the alternate squares upon a chess-board. It was therefore impossible

for a squadron of cavalry to push between two of these squares, without finding themselves at once assailed by a fire in front from that which was to the rear, and on both flanks from those betwixt which it had moved forward. Often and often during that day was the murderous experiment resorted to, and almost always with the same bad success.

Yet, although this order of battle possesses every efficient power of combination for defence against cavalry, its exterior is far from imposing. The men thus drawn up occupy the least possible space of ground, and a distinguished officer, who was destined to support the Brunswickers, informed me, that when he saw the furious onset of the French cavalry, with a noise and clamour that seemed to unsettle the firm earth over which they galloped, and beheld the small detached black masses which, separated from each other, stood each individually exposed to be overwhelmed by the torrent, he almost trembled for the event. But when the Brunswick troops opened their fire with coolness, readiness, and rapidity, the event seemed no longer doubtful. The artillery also, which was never in higher order, or more distinguished for excellent practice, made dreadful gaps in the squadrons of cavalry, and strewed the ground with men and horses, who were advancing to the charge. Still this was far from damping the courage of the French, who pressed on in defiance of every obstacle, and of the continued and immense slaughter which was made among their ranks. Or if the attack of the cavalry was suspended for a space, it

was but to give room for the operation of their artillery, which, within the distance of one hundred and fifty yards, played upon so obvious a mark as our solid squares afforded with the most destructive effect. "One fire," said a general officer, whom I have already quoted, "struck down seven men of the square with whom I was for the moment; the next was less deadly—it only killed three." Yet under such a fire, and in full view of these clouds of cavalry, waiting like birds of prey to dash upon them where the slaughter should afford the slightest opening, did these gallant troops close their files over their dead and dying comrades, and resume with stern composure that compact array of battle, which their discipline and experience taught them afforded the surest means of defence. After the most desperate efforts on the part of the French to push back our right wing, and particularly to establish themselves on the road to Nivelles, and after a defence on the part of the British which rendered these efforts totally unavailing, the battle slackened in some degree in this quarter, to rage with greater fury, if possible, towards the left and centre of the British line.

It was now upon the village of Mount St John, and making use of the causeway or high-road between that hamlet and La Belle Alliance, that Bonaparte precipitated his columns, both of infantry and cavalry, under a tremendous fire of artillery, that was calculated to sweep every obstacle from their course. The ridge of the hill was upon this occasion very serviceable to the British, whose second line was posted behind it, and thus protect

ed, in some degree, from the direct fire, though not from the showers of shells which were thrown on purpose to annoy the troops, whom the enemy with reason supposed to be thus sheltered. The first line derived some advantage from a straggling hedge, (the same which, as already mentioned, gives the name of La Haye Sainte to the farm,) extending along their centre and left, and partly masking it, though, so far from being strong enough to serve as an intrenchment or breastwork, it could be penetrated by cavalry in almost every direction. Such as it was, however, its line of defence, or rather the troops by whom it was occupied, struck awe into the assailants; and while they hesitated to advance to charge it, they were themselves in their turn charged and overwhelmed by the British cavalry, who, dashing through the fence at the intervals which admitted of it, formed, charged, and broke the battalions which were advancing upon their line. The French cavalry came up to support their infantry, and where the British were in the least dispersed, which, from the impetuosity of the men and horses, was frequently unavoidable, our troops suffered severely. This was particularly experienced by some distinguished regiments, whom the military fashion of the times has converted into hussars, from that excellent old English establishment formerly called Light-Dragoons, which combined with much activity a degree of weight that cannot belong to troopers more slightly mounted You, who remember one or two of the picked regiments of 1795, cannot but recollect at once the sort of corps which is now in some degree superseded

by those mounted on light blood horses. It is at least certain, that after the most undaunted exertions on the part of the officers, seconding those of the Earl of Uxbridge, our light cavalry were found to suffer cruelly in their unequal encounter with the ponderous and sword-proof cuirassiers, and with the lancers. In every instance (and there were but too many) in which our cavalry pushed temporary success too far, they were overpowered by the weight and numbers of the enemy, and driven back with great loss. Many were killed, and several made prisoners, some of whom the French afterwards massacred in cold blood. Even the German Legion, so distinguished for discipline and courage during the Peninsular conflicts, were unequal, on this occasion, to sustain the shock of the French cavalry. And thus, such had been Bonaparte's dexterity in finding resources, and in applying them, the French seemed to have a temporary superiority in that very description of force, with which it was supposed altogether impossible he could be adequately provided. It was upon this occasion that Sir John Elley, now quarter-master-general, requested and obtained permission to bring up the heavy brigade, consisting of the Life Guards, the Oxford Blues, and Scotch Greys, and made a charge, the effect of which was tremendous. Notwithstanding the weight and armour of the cuirassiers, and the power of their horses, they proved altogether unable to withstand the shock of the heavy brigade, being literally rode down, both horse and man, while the strength of the British soldiers was no less preeminent when they mingled and

fought hand to hand. Several hundreds of French were forced headlong over a sort of quarry or gravel pit, where they rolled a confused and undistinguishable mass of men and horses, exposed to a fire which, being poured closely into them, soon put a period to their struggles. Amidst the fury of the conflict, some traces occurred of military indifference which merit being recorded. The Life Guards, coming up in the rear of the 95th, which distinguished regiment acted as sharpshooters in front of the line, sustaining and repelling a most formidable onset of the French, called out to them, as if it had been on the parade in the Park, "Bravo, ninety-fifth! do you *lather* them and we'll *shave* them!" The Scottish *amor patriæ* also displayed itself on this occasion. The Scotch Greys coming up to the support of a Highland regiment, all joined in the triumphal shout of "Scotland for ever!"—Amid the confusion presented by the fiercest and closest cavalry fight which had ever been seen, many individuals distinguished themselves by feats of personal strength and valour. Among these should not be forgotten Shaw, a corporal of the Life-Guards, well known as a pugilistic champion, and equally formidable as a swordsman. He is supposed to have slain or disabled ten Frenchmen with his own hand, before he was killed by a musket or pistol-shot.[1] But officers, also, of rank and distinc-

[1] [This brave man is said to have carried death to every one against whom he rode. His own was occasioned rather by the loss of blood from many cuts, than the magnitude of any one. He had been riding about fighting the whole of the day with his body streaming. At evening he stretched him-

tion, whom the usual habits of modern war render rather the directors than the actual agents of slaughter, were in this desperate action seen fighting hand to hand like common soldiers. "You are uncommonly savage to-day," said an officer to his friend, a young man of rank, who was arming himself with a third sabre, after two had been broken in his grasp: "What would you have me do?" answered the other, by nature one of the most gentle and humane men breathing; "we are here to kill the French, and he is the best man to-day who can kill most of them;"—and he again threw himself into the midst of the combat. Sir John Elley, who led the charge of the heavy brigade, was himself distinguished for personal prowess. He was at one time surrounded by several of the cuirassiers; but, being a tall and uncommonly powerful man, completely master of his sword and horse, he cut his way out, leaving several of his assailants on the ground, marked with wounds, indicating the unusual strength of the arm which inflicted them. Indeed, had not the ghastly evidences remained on the field, many of the blows dealt upon this occasion would have seemed borrowed from the annals of knight-errantry, for several of the corpses exhibited heads cloven to the chine, or severed from the shoulders. The issue of this conflict was, that the French cavalry were completely beaten off, and a great proportion of

self on the ground, close by a wounded comrade, and soon fell asleep. In the morning he was found dead, with his face leaning on his hand, as if life had been extinguished while he was in a state of insensibility.]

their attacking columns of infantry, amounting to about 3000 men, threw down their arms, and were sent off to Brussels as prisoners. Their arrival there added to the terrors of that distracted city; for a vague rumour having preceded their march, announcing the arrival of a column of French, they were for a long time expected as conquerors, not as prisoners. Even when they entered as captives, the sight of the procession did not relieve the terrors of the citizens; the continued thunder of the cannon still announced that the battle was undecided, and the manner of the prisoners themselves was that of men who expected speedy freedom and vengeance. One officer of cuirassiers was particularly remarked for his fine martial appearance, and the smile of stern contempt with which he heard the shouts of the exulting populace. "The emperor," he said, "the *emperor* will shortly be here;" and the menace of his frowning brow and clenched hand indicated the fatal consequences which would attend his arrival.

The contest was indeed so far from being decided, that it raged with the most uninterrupted fury; it had paused in some degree upon the centre and left, but only to be renewed with double ferocity in the right wing. The attack was commenced by successive columns of cavalry, rolling after each other like waves of the sea. The Belgian horse, who were destined to oppose them, again gave way, and galloped from the field in great disorder. Our advanced line of guns was stormed by the French, the artillery-men receiving orders to leave them, and retire within the squares of the infantry.

Thus, at least, thirty pieces of artillery were for the time abandoned; but to an enemy who could not either use them or carry them off. The scene now assumed the most extraordinary and unparalleled appearance. The large bodies of French cavalry rode furiously up and down amongst our small squares of infantry, seeking with desperate courage some point where they might break in upon them, but in vain, though many in the attempt fell at the very point of the bayonets.

In the meantime a brigade of horse-artillery, commanded by the lamented Major Norman Ramsay, opened its fire upon the columns. They retreated repeatedly, but it was only to advance with new fury, and to renew attempts which it seemed impossible for human strength and courage ultimately to withstand. As frequently as the cavalry retreated, our artillery-men, rushing out of the squares in which they had found shelter, began again to work their pieces, and made a destructive fire on the retiring squadrons. Two officers of artillery were particularly noticed, who, being in a square which was repeatedly charged, rushed out of it the instant the cavalry retreated, loaded one of the deserted guns which stood near, and fired it upon the horsemen. A French officer observed that this manœuvre was repeated more than once, and cost his troop many lives. At the next retreat of his squadron, he stationed himself by the gun, waving his sword, as if defying the British officers again to approach it. He was instantly shot by a grenadier, but prevented by his self-devotion a considerable loss to his countrymen. Other French

officers and men evinced the same desperate and devoted zeal in the cause which they had so rashly and unhappily espoused. One officer of rank, after leading his men as far as they would follow him towards one of the squares of infantry, found himself deserted by them, when the British fire opened, and instantly rode upon the bayonets, throwing open his arms as if to welcome the bullet which should bring him down. He was immediately shot, for the moment admitted of no alternative. On our part, the coolness of the soldiers was so striking as almost to appear miraculous. Amid the infernal noise, hurry, and clamour of the bloodiest action ever fought, the officers were obeyed as if on the parade; and such was the precision with which the men gave their fire, that the aid-de-camp could ride round each square with perfect safety, being sure that the discharge would be reserved till the precise moment when it ought regularly to be made. The fire was rolling or alternate, keeping up that constant and uninterrupted blaze, upon which, I presume, it is impossible to force a concentrated and effective charge of cavalry. Thus, each little phalanx stood by itself, like an impregnable fortress, while their crossing fires supported each other, and dealt destruction among the enemy, who frequently attempted to penetrate through the intervals, and to gain the flank, and even the rear of these detached masses. The Dutch, Hanoverian, and Brunswick troops, preserved the same solid order, and the same ready, sustained, and destructive fire, as the British regiments with whom they were intermingled.

Notwithstanding this well-supported and undaunted defence, the situation of our army became critical. The Duke of Wellington had placed his best troops in the first line; they had already suffered severely, and the quality of those who were brought up to support them was in some instances found unequal to the task. He himself saw a Belgian regiment give way at the instant it crossed the ridge of the hill, in the act of advancing from the second into the first line. The Duke rode up to them in person, halted the regiment, and again formed it, intending to bring them into the fire himself. They accordingly shouted *En avant! en avant!* and, with much of the manner which they had acquired by serving with the French, marched up, dressing their ranks with great accuracy, and holding up their heads with military precision. But as soon as they crossed the ridge of the hill, and again encountered the storm of balls and shells, from which they had formerly retreated, they went to the right-about once more, and fairly left the Duke to seek more resolved followers where he could find them. He accordingly brought up a Brunswick regiment, which advanced with less apparent enthusiasm than *les Braves Belges*, but kept their ground with more steadiness, and behaved very well. In another part of the field, the Hanoverian hussars of Cumberland, as they were called, a corps distinguished for their handsome appearance and complete equipments, were ordered to support a charge made by the British. Their gallant commanding-officer showed no alacrity in obeying this order, and indeed observed

so much ceremony, that, after having been once and again ordered to advance, an aid-de-camp of the Duke of Wellington informed him of his Grace's command, that he should either advance or draw off his men entirely, and not remain there to show a bad example and discourage others. The gallant officer of hussars considering this as a serious option, submitted to his own decision, was not long in making his choice, and having expressed to the aid-de-camp his sense of the Duke's kindness, and of the consideration which he had for raw troops, under a fire of such unexampled severity, he said he would embrace the alternative of drawing his men off, and posting them behind the hamlet of Saint John. This he accordingly did, in spite of the reproaches of the aid-de-camp, who loaded him with every epithet that is most disgraceful to a soldier. The incident, although sufficiently mortifying in itself, and attended, as may be supposed, with no little inconvenience at such a moment, had something in it so comic, that neither the General nor any of his attendants were able to resist laughing when it was communicated by the incensed aid-de-camp. I have been told many of the officers and soldiers of this unlucky regiment left it in shame, joined themselves to other bodies of cavalry, and behaved well in the action. But the valiant commander not finding himself comfortable in the place of refuge which he had himself chosen, fled to Brussels, and alarmed the town with a report that the French were at his heels. His regiment was afterwards in a manner disbanded, or attached to the service of the commissariat.

These circumstances I communicate to you, not in the least as reflecting upon the national character, either of the Hanoverians or Belgians, both of whom had troops in the field, by whom it was gloriously sustained; but as an answer to those who have remarked, that the armies not being greatly disproportioned in point of numbers, the contest ought to have been sooner decided in favour of the Duke of Wellington. The truth is, that the Duke's first line *alone*, with occasional reinforcements from the second, sustained the whole brunt of the action; and it would have been in the highest degree imprudent to have made any movement in advance even to secure advantages which were frequently gained, since implicit reliance could not be placed upon the raw troops and militia, of whom the support was chiefly composed. With 80,000 British troops, it is probable the battle would not have lasted two hours, though it is impossible it could in that event have been so entirely decisive, since the French, less completely exhausted, would probably have been able to take better measures for covering their retreat.

Meanwhile the battle raged in every point. The centre and left were again assaulted, and, if possible, more furiously than before. The farm-house of La Haye Sainte, lying under the centre of the British line, was at last stormed by the French troops, who put the gallant defenders to the sword. They were Hanoverian sharpshooters, who had made good the post with the most undaunted courage, whilst they had a cartridge remaining, and afterwards maintained an unequal contest with their

bayonets through the windows and embrasures. As the entrance of the farm fronted the high-road, and was in the very focus of the enemy's fire, it was impossible to send supplies of ammunition by that way; and the commanding-officer unfortunately had not presence of mind to make a breach through the back part of the wall, for the purpose of introducing them. "*I* ought to have thought of it," said the Duke of Wellington, who seems to have considered it as his duty to superintend and direct even the most minute details of that complicated action; "but," as he added, with a very unnecessary apology, "my mind could not embrace every thing at once." The post meanwhile, though long maintained by the enemy, was of little use to them, as our artillery on the ridge were brought to plunge into it, and the attempt to defend it as a point of support for his future attacks, cost Bonaparte more men than he had lost in carrying it. On the right Hougoumont continued to be as fiercely assailed, but more successfully defended. The carnage in that point was dreadful; the French at length had recourse to shells, by which they set on fire, first, a large stack of hay in the farm-yard, and then the chateau itself. Both continued to blaze high in the air, spreading a thick black smoke, which ascended far over that of the cannonade, and seemed to announce that some dreadful catastrophe had befallen the little garrison. Many of the wounded had been indeed carried into the chateau for shelter, and, horrible to relate, could not be withdrawn from it when it took fire. But the Guards con-

tinued to make good the garden and the courtyard, and the enemy's utmost efforts proved unable to dispossess them. The various repulses which the French had met with in this part of the field, seemed by degrees to render their efforts less furious, and the right wing re-established its complete communication with this *point d'appui*, or key of the position, and reinforced its defenders as occasion demanded.

During this scene of tumult and carnage, the Duke of Wellington exposed his person with a freedom which, while the position of the armies, and the nature of the ground, rendered it inevitably necessary, made all around him tremble for that life on which it was obvious that the fate of the battle depended. There was scarcely a square but he visited in person, encouraging the men by his presence, and the officers by his directions. Many of his short phrases are repeated by them, as if they were possessed of talismanic effect. While he stood on the centre of the high-road in front of Mount St John, several guns were levelled against him, distinguished as he was by his suite, and the movements of the officers who came and went with orders. The balls repeatedly grazed a tree on the right-hand of the road, which tree now bears his name. "That's good practice," observed the Duke to one of his suite; "I think they fire better than in Spain." Riding up to the 95th, when in front of the line, and even then expecting a formidable charge of cavalry, he said, "Stand fast, 95th—we must not be beat—what will they say in Eng-

land?"[1] On another occasion, when many of the best and bravest men had fallen, and the event of the action seemed doubtful even to those who remained, he said, with the coolness of a spectator, who was beholding some well-contested sport—"Never mind, we'll win this battle yet." To another regiment, then closely engaged, he used a common sporting expression; "Hard pounding this, gentlemen; let's see who will pound longest." All who heard him issue orders took confidence from his quick and decisive intellect; all who saw him caught mettle from his undaunted composure. His staff, who had shared so many glories and dangers by his side, fell man by man around him, yet seemed in their own agony only to regard his safety. Sir William De Lancey, struck by a spent ball, fell from his horse—"Leave me to die," he said to those who came to assist him, "attend to the

[1] [In action prompt, in sentence brief.—
"Soldiers, stand firm," exclaimed the Chief,
"England shall tell the fight!"
On came the whirlwind—like the last
But fiercest sweep of tempest-blast—
On came the whirlwind—steel-gleams broke
Like lightning through the rolling smoke;
The war was waked anew,
Three hundred cannon-mouths roar'd loud,
And from their throats, with flash and cloud,
Their showers of iron threw.
Beneath their fire, in full career,
Rush'd on the ponderous cuirassier,
The lancer couch'd his ruthless spear,
And hurrying as to havoc near,
The cohorts' eagles flew.
In one dark torrent, broad and strong,
The advancing onset roll'd along,
Forth harbinger'd by fierce acclaim,
That, from the shroud of smoke and flame,
Peal'd wildly the imperial name.
SIR WALTER SCOTT'S *Poetical Works*, vol. xi., p. 271-2.]

Duke."[1] The lamented Sir Alexander Gordon,[2] whose early experience and high talents had already rendered him the object of so much hope and expectation, received his mortal wound while expostulating with the General on the personal danger to which he was exposing himself. Lieutenant Colonel Canning, and many of our lost heroes, died with the Duke's name on their expiring lips. Amid the havoc which had been made among his immediate attendants, his Grace sent off a young gentleman, acting as aid-de-camp, to a general of brigade in another part of the field, with a message of importance. In returning he was shot through the lungs, but, as if supported by the resolution to do his duty, he rode up to the Duke of Wellington, delivered the answer to his message, and then dropped from his horse, to all appearance a dying man. In a word, if the most devoted attachment on the part of all who approached him, can add to the honours of a hero, never did a general receive so many and such affecting proofs of it; and their devotion was repaid by his sense of its value, and sorrow for their loss. "Believe me," he afterwards said, "that nothing, excepting a battle lost, can be half so melancholy as a battle won. The bravery of my troops has hitherto saved me from that greater evil; but, to win even such a battle as this of Waterloo, at the expense of the lives of so many gallant friends,

[1] [This accomplished officer had been married in the April preceding, to the beautiful daughter of Sir James Hall of Dunglass, Bart.; and the young lady reached the Netherlands in time to witness his death.]

[2] [Brother of the Earl of Aberdeen, who has erected a monument on the spot where he received his wound.]

could only be termed a heavy misfortune, were it not for its important results to the public benefit."[1]

In the meanwhile it seemed still doubtful whether these sacrifices had not been made in vain; for the French, though repulsed in every point, continued their incessant attacks with a perseverance of which they were formerly deemed incapable; and the line of chequered squares, hitherto successfully opposed to them, was gradually, from the great reduction of numbers, presenting a diminished and less formidable appearance. One general officer was under the necessity of stating, that his brigade was reduced to one-third of its numbers, that those who remained were exhausted with fatigue, and that a temporary relief, of however short duration, seemed a measure of peremptory necessity. "Tell him," said the Duke, "what he proposes is impossible. He, and I, and

[1] [Period of honour as of woes,
What bright careers 'twas thine to close!—
Mark'd on thy roll of blood what names
To Britain's memory, and to Fame's,
Laid there their last immortal claims!
Thou saw'st in seas of gore expire
Redoubted PICTON'S soul of fire—
Saw'st in the mingled carnage lie
All that of PONSONBY could die—
DE LANCEY change Love's bridal-wreath,
For laurels from the hand of Death—
Saw'st gallant MILLER'S failing eye
Still bent where Albion's banners fly,
And CAMERON, in the shock of steel,
Die like the offspring of Lochiel;
And generous GORDON, 'mid the strife,
Fall while he watch'd his leader's life.—
Ah! though her guardian angel's shield
Fenced Britain's hero through the field,
Fate not the less her power made known,
Through his friends' hearts to pierce his own!
SIR WALTER SCOTT'S *Poetical Works*, vol. xi., p. 285-6.]

every Englishman in the field, must die on the spot which we now occupy."—"It is enough," returned the general; "I, and every man under my command, are determined to share his fate." A friend of ours had the courage to ask the Duke of Wellington, whether in that conjuncture he looked often to the woods from which the Prussians were expected to issue?—"No," was the answer; "I looked oftener at my watch than at any thing else. I knew if my troops could keep their position till night, that I must be joined by Blucher before morning, and we would not have left Bonaparte an army next day. But," continued he, "I own I was glad as one hour of daylight slipped away after another, and our position was still maintained."—"And if," continued the querist, "by misfortune the position had been carried?"—'We had the wood behind to retreat into."—"And if the wood also was forced?"—"No, no; they could never have so beaten us but we could have made good the wood against them."—From this brief conversation it is evident, that in his opinion, whose judgment is least competent to challenge, even the retreat of the English on this awful day would have afforded but temporary success to Bonaparte.

While this furious conflict lasted, the Prussian general, with the faith and intrepidity which characterise him, was pressing forward to the assistance of his allies. So early as between three and four o'clock, the division of Bulow appeared menacing the right flank of the French, chiefly with light troops and cavalry. But this movement was

foreseen and provided against by Bonaparte. Besides the immense force with which he sustained the main conflict, he had kept in reserve a large body of troops, under Count Lobau, who were opposed to those of Bulow with a promptitude which appeared like magic; our officers being at a loss almost to conjecture whence the forces came, which appeared as it were to rise out of the earth to oppose this new adversary. The engagement (which consisted chiefly in sharpshooting) continued in this quarter, but with no great energy, as the Prussian general waited the coming up of the main body of Blucher's army. This was retarded by many circumstances. We have already noticed the state of the cross-roads, or rather tracks, through which a numerous army had to accomplish their passage. But besides, the effects of the battle of Ligny were still felt, and it was not only natural but proper that Blucher, before involving himself in defiles from which retreat became impossible, should take some time to ascertain whether the English were able to maintain their ground until he should come up to their assistance. For, in the event of their being routed, with the usual circumstances of defeat, before the Prussians arrived, Blucher must have found himself in a most critical situation, engaged in the defiles of St Lambert, with one victorious French army in front, and another pressing upon his rear at Wavre. Such at least is the opinion of our best and most judicious officers. But the loyalty of the Prince-Marshal's character did not permit him long to hesitate upon advancing to the support of his illustrious ally.

Grouchy and Vandamme, with their combined forces, amounting to upwards of thirty thousand men, had followed the Prussian rear (commanded by Tauenzein) as far as Wavre, less, it would seem with the purpose of actual fight, than of precipitating the retreat, which they supposed Blucher to have commenced with his whole army. At length Tauenzein halted upon the villages of Wavre and Bielge, on the river Dyle, and there prepared to defend himself. It is probable that, about this time, the appearance of Bulow's corps on Bonaparte's right flank made the French general desirous the Prussians should be attacked in a different and distant point, in such a serious manner as might effectually engage their attention, and prevent their detaching more forces to the support of Wellington. Accordingly orders were despatched to Grouchy to make a serious attack upon that part of the Prussian army which was opposed to him. But Bonaparte was not aware, nor does Grouchy seem to have discovered, that the forces he was thus to engage only consisted of a strong rear-guard, which occupied the villages and position upon the Dyle to mask the march of the main army under the Prince-Marshal himself, which was already defiling to the right through the passes of St Lambert, and in full march to unite itself with Wellington and Bulow. The resistance of Tauenzein, however, was so obstinate as to confirm Grouchy in the belief that he was engaged with a great proportion of the Prussian army. The bridge at Wavre, particularly, was repeatedly lost and gained before the French were able to make their footing good beyond it.

At length a French colonel snatched the eagle of his regiment, and rushing forward, crossed the bridge, and struck it into the ground on the other side. His corps followed with a unanimous shout of *Vive l'Empereur!* and although the gallant officer who thus led them on was himself slain on the spot, his followers succeeded in carrying the village. That of Bielge at the same time fell into their hands, and Grouchy anxiously expected from his Emperor orders to improve his success. But no such orders arrived; the sound of the cannon in that direction slackened, and at length died away; and it was next morning before Grouchy heard the portentous news that awaited him, announcing the fate of Napoleon and his army.

The French have since pretended, that their defeat was, in a great measure, owing to Grouchy's neglecting to make a lateral movement to his own left to the support of Napoleon. They ascribe this to the rapacity of Vandamme, who is said to have urged Grouchy to continue his movement upon Brussels, rather than to unite himself with Bonaparte, in order that their division might have the first share of the pillage of the city. If, however, this division of the French army had not fought at Wavre, where, with difficulty, they defeated the Prussian rear-guard, it seems clear, that Tauenzein, who showed great generalship, would have become the assailant, upon their manifesting a purpose of closing up towards the army of Napoleon. In either case they would have had the same number of enemies to dispose of, and consequently would have had the same difficulty in

rendering effectual assistance to Bonaparte in his last exigency. There is no doubt, however, that their remaining inactive on the other side of the Dyle annihilated Napoleon's last chance of succour.

Meantime Blucher pressed the march of his forces through the defiles which separated him and Wellington. Notwithstanding the consequences of his fall upon the 16th, the veteran insisted upon leaving his carriage and being placed on horseback, that he might expedite the march by precept and example. The sun was, however, near setting before his forces appeared in strength issuing from the woods upon the flank of the contending armies. It seems to have been one of Bonaparte's leading errors to miscalculate the moral force of the Prussian character, and especially that of Blucher. Though it was now obvious that the army of the Prince-Marshal was appearing on the field, Napoleon deluded himself to the last by a belief that they were followed by Grouchy, and either retreating, or moving laterally in the same line with him; a circumstance which countenances the report of those French officers who allege orders to this purpose had been sent to Grouchy, although that Marshal denied having ever received them. In this mistake Bonaparte obstinately persisted until the consequences proved fatal to the very last chance which he had of covering his own retreat. It was for some time supposed, that he mistook the Prussians for his own forces under Grouchy. This was not the case, nor was it possible it could be so. His real error was sufficient for his destruction, without exaggerating it into one that would indicate

insanity. But as appears from Maréchal Ney's letter, Bonaparte spread among the soldiers, by means of the unfortunate Labedoyere, his own belief that Grouchy was advancing to their support. He imagined, in short, that, at the very worst, his own general had made a lateral movement, corresponding to that of Blucher, and was as near to support as the other was to attack him. In this belief, all the slaughter and all the repulses of that bloody day did not prevent his risking a desperate and final effort.

Notwithstanding the perseverance with which Bonaparte had renewed his attacks upon the English position, and the vast number of his best cavalry and infantry who had fallen in the struggle, he had still in reserve nearly 15,000 men of his own guard, who, remaining on the ridge of La Belle Alliance, or behind it, had scarcely drawn a trigger during the action. But about seven o'clock at night their Emperor determined to devote this proved and faithful reserve, as his last stake, to the chance of one of those desperate games in which he had been frequently successful. For this purpose he left the more distant point of observation, which he had for some time occupied upon the heights in the rear of the line, and descending from the hill, placed himself in the midst of the highway fronting Mount St John, and within about a quarter of a mile of the English line. The banks, which rise high on each side, protected him from such balls as did not come in a direct line. In attaining this place of security, he incurred the only personal risk which he ran in the action. As they galloped

towards the hollow way, a bullet struck off the pommel of an officer's saddle who was near him. Bonaparte coolly observed, "You must keep in the ravine." Here he caused his guards to defile before him, and acquainting them that the English cavalry and infantry were entirely destroyed, and that to carry their position they had only to sustain with bravery a heavy fire of their artillery, he concluded by pointing to the causeway, and exclaiming, "There, gentlemen, is the road to Brussels!" The prodigious shouts of *Vive l'Empereur*, with which the Guard answered this appeal, led our troops, and the Duke of Wellington himself, to expect an instant renewal of the attack, with Napoleon as the leader. Many an eye was eagerly bent to the quarter from whence the clamour proceeded; but the mist, as well as the clouds of smoke, rendered it impossible to see any object distinctly. None listened to the shout with more eager hope than our own Great General, who probably thought, like the Avenger in Shakspeare,

> ——— "There thou should'st be:
> By this great clatter one of the greatest note
> Seems bruited."———

All indeed expected an attack headed by Bonaparte in person; and in failing upon this instant and final crisis to take the command of his Guards, whom he destined to try the last cast of his fortune, he disappointed both his friends and enemies.

The Imperial Guard, however, rallying in their progress such of the broken cavalry and infantry of the line as yet maintained the combat, advanced dauntlessly. But the repeated repulses of the

French had not been left unimproved by the British. The extreme right of the line, commanded by General Frederick Adam, under Lord Hill, had gradually and almost imperceptibly gained ground after each unsuccessful charge, until the space between Hougoumont and Braine la Leude being completely cleared of the enemy, the British right wing, with its artillery and sharpshooters, was brought round from a convex to a concave position, so that our guns raked the French columns as soon as they debouched upon the causeway for their final attack. Our artillery had orders during the whole action to fire only upon the infantry and cavalry of the French, and not to waste their ammunition and energy in the less decisive exchange of shot with the French guns. The service of the artillery was upon this occasion so accurate, and at the same time so destructive, that the heads of the French attacking columns were enfiladed, and in a manner annihilated, before they could advance upon the high-road. Those who witnessed the fire and its effects, describe it to me as if the enemy's columns kept perpetually advancing from the hollow way without ever gaining ground on the plain, so speedily were the files annihilated as they came into the line of the fire. Enthusiasm, however, joined to the impulse of those in the rear, who forced forward the front into the scene of danger, at length carried the whole attacking force into the plain. But their courage was obviously damped. They advanced indeed against every obstacle till they attained the ridge, where the British soldiers lay on the ground to avoid the destructive fire of

artillery, by which the assault was covered: but this was their final effort. "Up, Guards, and at them," cried the Duke of Wellington, who was then with a brigade of the Guards. In an instant they sprung up, and, assuming the offensive, rushed upon the attacking columns with the bayonet. This body of the Guards had been previously disposed in line, instead of the squares which they had hitherto occupied. But the line was of unusual depth, consisting of four ranks instead of two. "You have stood cavalry in this order," said the General, "and can therefore find no difficulty in charging infantry." The effect of their three fatal cheers, and of the rapid advance which followed, was decisive. The Guards of Napoleon were within twenty yards of those of our Sovereign, but not one staid to cross bayonets with a British soldier The consciousness that no support or reserve remained to them, added confusion to their retreat. This was observed by both generals with suitable emotion. The Duke of Wellington perceived the disorder of the French retreat, and the advance of the Prussians on their right flank, where they were already driving in all that was opposed to them. It was remarked that the sharpness and precision of the Duke's sight enabled him to mention both these circumstances two or three minutes before they could be discovered by the able officers around him. He immediately commanded the British troops to form line, and assume the offensive. The whole line formed four deep, and, supported by the cavalry and artillery, rushed down the slopes and up the corresponding bank, driving before them

the flying French, whose confusion became each moment more irretrievable. The tirailleurs and cavalry, amounting to several regiments of the Imperial Guard, gallantly attempted to cover the retreat. They were charged by the British cavalry, and literally cut to pieces.

Bonaparte saw the issue of the fight with the same accuracy as the English General, but with far different feelings. He had shown the utmost coolness and indifference during the whole day, and while he praised the discipline and conduct of particular corps of the British army, whose gallantry he witnessed, he affected to lament their necessary and inevitable destruction. Even to reports which were incessantly brought to him of the increasing strength and progress of the Prussians upon his right flank, he turned an indifferent ear, bending his whole attention, and apparently resting his final hope, upon the success of the ultimate attack by the Imperial Guards. When he observed them recoil in disorder, the cavalry intermixed with the foot and trampling them down, he said to his aid-de-camp, "*Ils sont mêlées ensemble!*" then looked down, shook his head, and became, according to the expression of his guide, pale as a corpse. Immediately afterwards two large bodies of British cavalry appeared in rapid advance on each flank; and as the operations of the Prussians had extended along his right flank, and were rapidly gaining his rear, Bonaparte was in great danger of being made prisoner. He then pronounced to Bertrand, who was always by his side, the fatal words, "All is over.

it is time to save ourselves,"[1] and left to their fate the army which that day had shed their blood for him with such profusion. His immediate attendants, about ten or twelve in number, scrambled along with him out of the hollow way, and gaining the open plain, all fled as fast as their horses could carry them, or the general confusion would admit, without a single attempt, on Bonaparte's part, to rally his army or cover their retreat. In one instance alone he displayed some spirit of the *fanfaronade* by which his conduct was frequently distinguished. In passing a battery of fourteen guns near to the observatory, he ordered that before they were deserted fourteen rounds should be fired from each;—as if in such a moment the precision of a review would be required from an army, to which he was himself setting the example of precipitate flight. Whatever may be thought of Bonaparte's behaviour on former occasions, it would appear, either that prosperity had clouded his energy of mind, or that he was in some degree wanting to himself on the conclusion of this memorable day. For, after having shown, during the progress of the battle, great judgment, composure, and presence of mind, the mode of his retreat was much less than honourable to a soldier, who had risen by personal courage and conduct to the greatest pitch of power that was ever enjoyed by an individual.

At half-past nine the fugitive arrived at Genappe

[1] "A présent c'est fini.... Sauvons nous."

and experienced great difficulty in getting through the narrow street and over the bridge at that village, which was so encumbered with cannon and baggage-carts, that it was more than an hour ere he could obtain a free passage. From thence he pursued his flight, still upon the spur, to Quatre Bras, and from Quatre Bras to Gosselies, where he dismounted, and walked on foot to Charleroi. He stopped for the first time in a meadow beyond that town, and, for the first time that day, took some refreshment. In the course of his flight, he received from time to time the reports brought him by different officers, of the disastrous fate of the army which he had abandoned. From the neighbourhood of Charleroi he again resumed his rapid flight towards Paris.

Meanwhile the front attack of the English, and that of the Prussians upon the flank, met with slight opposition. Just as the English army had deployed into line for the general charge, the sun streamed out, as if to shed his setting glories upon the conquerors of that dreadful day. Fatigue and diminution of numbers, even wounds, were forgotten, when the animating command was given to assume the offensive. Headed by the Duke of Wellington himself, with his hat in his hand, the line advanced with the utmost spirit and rapidity. The fire of the enemy from one hundred and fifty pieces of artillery did not stop them for a single moment, and in a short time the French artillerymen deserted their guns, cut loose their traces, and mingled in the flight, now altogether confused and universal, the fugitives trampling down those who

yet endeavoured to keep their ranks. The first line had hardly the vestige of military order when it was flung back on the second, and both became then united in one tide of general and undistinguished flight. Baggage-waggons, artillery-carts, guns overthrown, and all the impediments of a hurried flight, cumbered the open field as well as the causeway, without mentioning the thick-strewn corpses of the slain, and the bodies of the still more miserable wounded, who in vain shrieked and implored compassion, as fliers and pursuers drove headlong over them in the agony of fear or the ecstasy of triumph. All the guns which were in line along the French position, to the number of one hundred and fifty, fell into the immediate possession of the British. The last gun fired was a howitzer, which the French had left upon the road. It was turned upon their retreat, and discharged by Captain Campbell, aid-de-camp to General Adam, with his own hand, who had thus the honour of concluding the battle of Waterloo, which, it has been said, Bonaparte himself commenced.

There remained, however, for the unhappy fugitives, a flight and pursuit of no ordinary description. And here the timely junction of the Prussians was of the last consequence to the common cause of Europe. The British cavalry were completely wearied with the exertions of the day, and utterly incapable of following the chase. Even the horses of the officers were altogether unable to strike a trot for any length of way, so that the arrival of the Prussians, with all their cavalry fit for instant and rapid operation, and organized by so active

a quarter-master-general as Gneisenau, was essential to gathering in the harvest, which was already nearly won and fairly reaped.

The march and advance of the Prussians crossed the van of the British army, after they had attacked the French position, about the farm-house of La Belle Alliance; and there, or near to that spot, the Duke of Wellington and Prince-Marshal Blucher met to congratulate each other upon their joint success, and its important consequences. The hamlet, which is said to have taken its name from a little circumstance of village scandal,[1] came to bear an unexpected and extraordinary coincidence with the situation of the combined armies, which inclines many foreigners even now to give the fight the name of the Battle of La Belle Alliance. Here, too, the victorious allies of both countries exchanged military greeting,—the Prussians halting their regimental bands to play "God save the King," while the British returned the compliment with three cheers to the honour of Prussia. The Prince-Marshal immediately gave orders that every man and horse in his army capable of action should press upon the rear of the fugitives, without giving them a moment's time to rally. The night was illuminated by a bright moon, so that the fliers found no refuge, and experienced as little mercy.

To the last, indeed, the French had forfeited all

[1] A woman who resided here, after marrying two husbands in her own station of creditable yeomanry, chose to unite herself, upon her becoming a second time a widow, to her own hind or ploughman; and the name of La Belle Alliance was bestowed on her place of residence in ridicule of this match.

claim; for their cruelty towards the Prussians taken upon the 16th, and towards the British wounded and prisoners made during the battle of the 18th, was such as to exclude them from the benefit of the ordinary rules of war. Their lancers, in particular, rode over the field during the action, despatching with their weapons the wounded British, with the most inveterate rancour; and many of the officers who have recovered from the wounds they received on that glorious day, sustained the greatest danger and most lasting inconvenience from such as were inflicted by those savages, when they were in no condition either to offend others or to defend themselves. The *Quoi! tu n'es pas mort?* of the spearman, was usually accompanied with a thrust of his lance, dealt with an inveteracy which gives great countenance to the general opinion, that their orders were to give no quarter. Even the British officers who were carried before Bonaparte, although civilly treated while he spoke to them, and dismissed with assurances that they should have surgical assistance and proper attendance, were no sooner out of his presence than they were stripped, beaten, and abused. Most of the prisoners whom the French took from our light cavalry were put to death in cold blood, or owed their safety to concealment or a speedy escape. In short, it seemed as if the French army, when they commenced this desperate game, had, like Bucaniers setting forth upon a cruise, renounced the common rules of war, and bonds of social amity, and become ambitious of distinguishing themselves as enemies to the human spe-

cies. This unnatural hatred, rashly announced and cruelly acted upon, was as fearfully avenged. The Prussians listened not, and they had no reason to listen, to cries for mercy from those who had thus abused their momentary advantages over themselves and their allies; and their light horse, always formidable on such occasions, made a fearful and indiscriminate slaughter, scarce interrupted even by the temptation of plundering the baggage with which the roads were choked, and unchecked by an attempt at resistance. Those soldiers who had begun the morning with such hopes, and whose conduct during the battle vindicated their having done so, were now so broken in heart and spirits, that scores of them fled at sight of a single Prussian hussar.

Yet it is remarkable that, amid the countless number who fell, both of privates and officers, we do not notice many of those names distinguished in the bulletins of Bonaparte's former campaigns. Whether the marshals, doubting the success of their old master, hazarded themselves less frankly in his cause, or did so with better fortune than belonged to our distinguished and undaunted Picton, Ponsonby, and other officers of high rank whose loss we lament, it is not for me to conjecture. But, except Duhesme and Friant, neither of whose names was very much distinguished, we hear of no general officers among the French list of the slain. The latter was killed by a ball close to the turncoat Ney, who commanded the imperial guards in the last attack. The death of Duhesme had something in it which was Homeric. He was over-

taken in the village of Genappe by one of the Duke of Brunswick's black hussars, of whom he begged quarter. The soldier regarded him sternly, with his sabre uplifted, and then briefly saying, "The Duke of Brunswick died yesterday," bestowed on him his death's wound.

Κάτθανε καὶ Πάτροκλος, ὅπερ σέο πολλὸν ἀμείνων.

General Cambrone was said also to have fallen after refusing quarter, and announcing to the British, by whom it was offered, "The Imperial Guard can die, but never surrender." The speech and the devotion of the general received honourable mention in the Minutes of the Chamber of Representatives. But the passage was ordered to be erased next day, it being discovered that General Cambrone was a prisoner in Lord Wellington's camp.

The French retreat was utter rout and confusion, the men deserting their officers, the officers the men, all discipline neglected, and every thing thrown away which could for a moment impede the rapidity of their panic flight. A slight attempt was made to halt at the village of Genappe, but there and at Charleroi, and wherever else the terrified fugitives attempted to pause, a cannon-shot or two, or the mere sound of a Prussian drum or trumpet, was sufficient to put them again to the rout.

The English remained on the field of battle and the villages adjacent. Be it not forgotten, that, after such attention to their wounded companions, as the moment permitted, they carried their succours to the disabled French, without deigning

to remember that the defenceless and groaning wretches who encumbered the field of battle in heaps, were the same men who had displayed the most relentless cruelty on every temporary advantage which they obtained during this brief campaign. They erected huts over them to protect them from the weather, brought them water, and shared with them their refreshments—showing in this the upright nobleness of their own dispositions, and giving the most vivid testimony of their deserving that victory with which Providence had crowned them—a victory as unparalleled in its consequences, as the battle itself was in its length, obstinacy, and importance. Adieu! my dear Major Excuse a long letter, which contains much which you may have heard better told, mixed with some things with which you are probably not yet acquainted. The details which I have ventured to put into writing, are most of them from the authority of officers high in command upon that memorable day, and I may therefore be allowed to hope that even repetitions will be pardoned, for the sake of giving more authenticity to the facts which I have narrated. Yours, &c.

PAUL.

LETTER IX.

PAUL TO HIS SISTER MARGARET.

English Visitors to Waterloo—De Coster, Bonaparte's Guide—Appearance of the Field of Battle—Livrets of the French Soldiers—German Prayer-books—Letters—Gentle Shepherd—Quack Advertisements—Crops trampled down—Houses and Hamlets ruinous—Claim of Damages—Hougoumont—Relics taken by Visitors—Number Slain in the Battle—Plunder obtained by the Peasants—Sale of Relics of the Battle—MS. of French Songs—Romance of Dunois—The Troubadour—Cupid's Choice—Reflections suggested by these Poems—Chanson—Romance de Troubadour—Chanson de la Folie.

I SHOULD now, my dear sister, give you some description of the celebrated field of Waterloo. But although I visited it with unusual advantages, it is necessary that I should recollect how many descriptions have already appeared of this celebrated scene of the greatest event of modern times, and that I must not weary your patience with a twice-told tale. Such and so numerous have been the visits of English families and tourists, as to enrich the peasants of the vicinity by the consequences of an event which menaced them with total ruin. The good old Flemish housewife, who keeps the principal cabaret at Waterloo, even when I was

there, had learnt the value of her situation, and charged three prices for our coffee, because she could gratify us by showing the very bed in which the *Grand Lord* slept the night preceding the action.[1] To what extremities she may have since proceeded in taxing English curiosity, it is difficult to conjecture. To say truth, the honest Flemings were at first altogether at a loss to comprehend the eagerness and enthusiasm by which their English visitors were influenced in their pilgrimages to this classic spot. Their country has been long the scene of military operations, in which the inhabitants themselves have seldom felt much personal interest. With them a battle fought and won is a battle forgotten, and the peasant resumes his ordinary labours after the armies have left his district, with as little interest in recollecting the conflict, as if it had been a thunder-storm which had passed away. You may conceive, therefore, the great surprise with which these honest pococurantes viewed the number of British travellers

[1] [The Duke of Wellington's cook, a Frenchman, who had been with him during most of the Peninsular campaigns, exhibited, on the 18th of June, a confidence in his Grace's fortune, which ought to be recorded. While the battle was raging, successive fugitives, in passing the little *auberge* in the village of Waterloo, where this man was busy in his vocation, gave him impatient warning that he had better pack up and secure his retreat, for that assuredly his master would want no dinner at Waterloo that day. The cook's answer was always, "*Monseigneur n'a rien dit.*" He continued to work among his pots and pans as usual, and the Duke found an excellent dinner, of thirty covers, ready when he reached, late in the evening, the humble roof where he had fixed, his headquarters.]

of every possible description who hastened to visit the field of Waterloo.

I was early in making my pilgrimage, yet there were half a dozen of parties upon the ground at the same time with that to which I belonged. Honest John de Coster, the Flemish peasant, whom Bonaparte has made immortal by pressing into his service as a guide, was the person in most general request, and he repeated with great accuracy the same simple tale to all who desired to hear him. I questioned him long and particularly, but I cannot pretend to have extracted any information in addition to what has been long ago very accurately published in the newspapers. For I presume you would be little interested in knowing, that, upon this memorable occasion, the ex-emperor rode a dappled horse, and wore a grey surtout with a green uniform coat; and, in memory of his party's badge, as I suppose, a violet-coloured waistcoat, and pantaloons of the same. It was, however, with no little emotion that I walked with De Coster from one place to another, making him show me, as nearly as possible, the precise stations which had been successively occupied by the fallen monarch on that eventful day. The first was at the farm of Rossum, near to that of La Belle Alliance, from which he had witnessed the unsuccessful attack upon Hougoumont. He remained there till about four o'clock, and then removed into the cottage of De Coster, where he continued until he descended into the ravine or hollow way. There was a deep and inexpressible feeling of awe in the reflection, that the last of these positions was the

identical place from which he, who had so long held the highest place in Europe, beheld his hopes crushed and his power destroyed. To recollect, that within a short month, the man whose name had been the terror of Europe, stood on the very ground which I now occupied, that right opposite was placed that commander whom the event of the day hailed *Vainqueur du Vainqueur de la terre* —that the landscape, now solitary and peaceful around me, presented so lately a scene of such horrid magnificence—that the very individual who was now at my side, had then stood by that of Napoleon, and witnessed every change in his countenance, from hope to anxiety, from anxiety to fear and to despair,—to recollect all this, oppressed me with sensations which I find it impossible to describe The scene seemed to have shifted so rapidly, that even while I stood on the very stage where it was exhibited, I felt an inclination to doubt the reality of what had passed.

De Coster himself seems a sensible, shrewd peasant. He complained that the curiosity of the visitors who came to hear his tale, interfered a good deal with his ordinary and necessary occupations: I advised him to make each party, who insisted upon seeing and questioning him, a regular charge of five francs, and assured him that if he did so, he would find that Bonaparte had kept his promise of making his fortune, though in a way he neither wished nor intended. Pere de Coster said he was obliged to me for the hint, and I dare say has not failed to profit by it.[1]

[1] A very minute narrative of Bonaparte's conduct during

The field of battle plainly told the history of the fight, as soon as the positions of the hostile armies were pointed out. The extent was so limited, and the interval between them so easily seen and commanded, that the various manœuvres could be traced with the eye upon the field itself, as upon a military plan of a foot square. All ghastly remains of the carnage had been either burned or buried, and the relics of the fray which yet remained were not in themselves of a very imposing kind. Bones of horses, quantities of old hats, rags of clothes, scraps of leather, and fragments of books and papers, strewed the ground in great profusion, especially where the action had been most bloody Among the last, those of most frequent occurrence were the military *livrets*, or memorandum-books of the French soldiers. I picked up one of these, which shows, by its order and arrangement, the strict discipline which at one time was maintained in the French army, when the soldier was obliged to enter in such an account-book, not only the state of his pay and equipments, but the occasions on which he served and distinguished himself, and the punishments, if any, which he had incurred. At the conclusion is a list of the duties of the private soldier, amongst which is that of knowing how to dress his victuals, and particularly to make good soup. The *livret* in my possession appears to have belonged to the Sieur Mallet, of the 2d battalion of the 8th regiment of the line: he had been in the service since the year 1791, until the

the whole day, taken down from the mouth of this peasant, forms a curious article in the Appendix.

18th of June, 1815, which day probably closed his account, and with it all his earthly hopes and prospects. The fragments of German prayer-books were so numerous, that I have little doubt a large edition had been pressed into the military service of one or other party, to be used as cartridge-paper. Letters, and other papers, memorandums of business, or pledges of friendship and affection, lay scattered about on the field—few of them were now legible. A friend picked up a copy of *The Gentle Shepherd* where the Scotch regiments had been stationed; a circumstance which appeals strongly to our national feeling, from the contrast between the rustic scenes of the pastoral and that in which the owner of the volume had probably fallen. Quack advertisements were also to be found where English soldiers had fallen. Among the universal remedies announced by these empirics, there was none against the dangers of such a field.

Besides these fragments, the surface of the field showed evident marks of the battle. The tall crops of maize and rye[1] were trampled into a thick

[1] [——" But other harvest here,
Than that which peasant's scythe demands,
Was gather'd in by sterner hands,
With bayonet, blade, and spear.
No vulgar crop was theirs to reap,
No stinted harvest thin and cheap!
Heroes before each fatal sweep
Fell thick as ripen'd grain,
And ere the darkening of the day,
Piled high as autumn shocks, there lay
The ghastly harvest of the fray,
The corpses of the slain.

" Ay, look again—that line so black
And trampled marks the bivouack,

black paste, under the feet of men and horses—the ground was torn in many places by the explosion of shells, and in others strangely broken up and rutted by the wheels of the artillery. Such signs of violent and rapid motion recorded, that

> Rank rush'd on rank, with squadron squadron closed,
> The thunder ceased not, nor the fire reposed.

Yet, abstracting from our actual knowledge of the dreadful cause of such appearances, they reminded me not a little of those which are seen upon a common a few days after a great fair has been held there. These transitory memorials were in a rapid course of disappearing, for the plough was already at work in several parts of the field. There is, perhaps, more feeling than wisdom in the wish, yet I own I should have been better pleased, if, for one season at least, the field where, in imagination, the ploughshare was coming in frequent contact with the corpses of the gallant dead, had been suffered to remain fallow. But the corn which must soon wave there will be itself a temporary protection to their humble graves, while it will

> You deep-graved ruts the artillery's track,
> So often lost and won;
> And close beside, the harden'd mud
> Still shows where, fetlock-deep in blood,
> The fierce dragoon, through battle's flood,
> Dash'd the hot war-horse on.
> These spots of excavation tell
> The ravage of the bursting shell—
> And feel'st thou not the tainted steam
> That reeks against the sultry beam,
> From yonder trenched mound?
> The pestilential fumes declare
> That Carnage has replenish'd there
> Her garner-house profound."
>
> SIR WALTER SCOTT'S *Poetical Works*, vol. xi., p. 254-6.]

speedily remove from the face of nature the melancholy traces of the strife of man.

The houses and hamlets which were exposed to the line of fire have of course suffered very much, being perforated by cannon-balls in every direction. This was particularly the case at La Haye Sainte. The inhabitants of these peaceful cottages might then exclaim, in the words of our admired friend,—

> "Around them, in them, the loud battle clangs;
> Within our very walls fierce spearmen push,
> And weapon'd warriors cross their clashing blades.
> Ah, woe is me! our warm and cheerful hearths,
> And rushed floors, whereon our children play'd,
> Are now the bloody lair of dying men!"[1]

There was not, indeed, a cottage in the vicinity but what, ere the eve of the fight, was crowded with the wounded, many of whom had only strength to creep to the next place of cover, that they might lay them down to die.

The village of Saint John, and others within the English position, had escaped with the demolition of the windows, and the breaches of the walls from without. The hamlets lying on the opposite heights, within the French line of bivouac, having been plundered to the bare walls, had sustained internal as well as external damage. Among other claims upon English generosity, and which may serve to illustrate the idea which foreigners have formed of its illimitable extent, one was made by a proprietor of this district for a considerable sum, stated to be

[1] Joanna Baillie's *Ethwald*, a Tragedy. *Part Second.*

the damage which his property had sustained in and through the battle of Waterloo. He was asked, why he thought a claim so unprecedented in the usual course of warfare would be listened to. He replied, that he understood the British had made compensation in Spain to sufferers under similar circumstances. It was next pointed out to him that no English soldier had or could have been accessary to the damage which he had sustained, since the hamlets and houses plundered lay within Bonaparte's position. The Fleming, without having studied at Leyden, understood the doctrine of consequential damages. He could not see that the circumstance alleged made much difference, since he argued, if the English had not obstinately placed themselves in the way, the French would have marched quietly on to Brussels, without doing him any material damage; and it was not until he was positively informed that his demand would not be granted that he remained silenced, but not satisfied.

Hougoumont (a name bestowed, I believe, by a mistake of our great commander, but which will certainly supersede the more proper one of Chateau-Goumont) is the only place of consideration which was totally destroyed. The shattered and blackened ruins of this little chateau remain among the wreck of its garden, while the fruit-trees, half torn down, half fastened to the walls, give some idea of the Dutch neatness with which it had been kept ere the storm of war approached it. The garden wall being secured by a strong high hedge, it is supposed the French continued the attack for some time before they were aware of the great strength

of their defences. Yet it is strange that Bonaparte, who witnessed the assault, never asked De Coster, who stood at his elbow, in what manner the garden was enclosed.

The wall was all loop-holed for the use of musketry, and the defenders also maintained a fire from scaffolds, which enabled them to level their guns. Most visitors bought peaches, and gathered hazel-nuts and filberts in the garden, with the pious purpose of planting, when they returned to England, trees, which might remind them and their posterity of this remarkable spot. The grove of trees around Hougoumont was shattered by grape-shot and musketry in a most extraordinary manner. I counted the marks upon one which had been struck in twenty different places, and I think there was scarce any one which had totally escaped. I understand the gentleman to whom this ravaged domain belongs is to receive full compensation from the government of the Netherlands.

I must not omit to mention, that, notwithstanding the care which had been bestowed in burying or burning the dead, the stench in several places of the field, and particularly at La Haye Sainte and Hougoumont, was such as to indicate that the former operation had been but hastily and imperfectly performed. It was impossible, of course, to attempt to ascertain the numbers of the slain; but, including those who fell on both sides before the retreat commenced, the sum of forty-thousand will probably be found considerably within the mark, and I have seen officers of experience who compute it much higher. When it is considered,

therefore, that so many human corpses, besides those of many thousand horses, were piled upon a field scarcely two miles long, and not above half a mile in breadth, it is wonderful that a pestilential disease has not broken out, to sum up the horrors of the campaign.

If the peasants in the neighbourhood of Waterloo suffered great alarm and considerable damage in the course of this tremendous conflict, it must be acknowledged they had peculiar and ample means of indemnification. They had, in the first place, the greatest share of the spoils of the field of battle, for our soldiers were too much exhausted to anticipate them in this particular Many country people were at once enriched by the plunder of the French baggage, and not a few by that of the British, which, having been ordered to retreat during the action, became embarrassed on the narrow causeway leading through the great forest of Soignies, and was there fairly sacked and pillaged by the runaway Belgians and the peasantry; a disgraceful scene, which nothing but the brilliancy of the great victory, and the consequent enthusiasm of joy, could have allowed to be passed over without strict enquiry. Many of our officers, and some but ill able to afford such a loss, were in this manner deprived of all their clothes and baggage at the moment of their advance into the territories of France. The servants of the officers themselves were sometimes accessary to this pillage; and it is said, that one of these fugitive domestics, with the address of one of Molière's rvants, or Terence's slaves, had the art to extract

from his master's parents a sum of money, which he pretended to have laid out upon his funeral, before they had received tidings that the pretended defunct had escaped the slaughter.

A more innocent source of profit has opened to many of the poor people about Waterloo, by the sale of such trinkets and arms as they collect daily from the field of battle; things of no intrinsic value, but upon which curiosity sets a daily increasing estimate. These memorials, like the books of the Sibyls, rise in value as they decrease in number. Almost every hamlet opens a mart of them as soon as English visitors appear. Men, women, and children rushed out upon us, holding up swords, pistols, carabines, and holsters, all of which were sold when I was there *à prix juste*, at least to those who knew how to drive a bargain. I saw a tolerably good carabine bought for five francs; to be sure there went many words to the bargain, for the old woman to whom it belonged had the conscience at first to ask a gold Napoleon for it, being about the value it would have borne in Birmingham. Crosses of the Legion of Honour were in great request, and already stood high in the market. I bought one of the ordinary sort for forty francs. The eagles which the French soldiers wore in front of their caps, especially the more solid ornament of that description which belonged to the Imperial Guards, were sought after, but might be had for a few sous. But the great object of ambition was to possess the armour of a cuirassier, which at first might have been bought in great quantity, almost all the wearers having fallen in

that bloody battle. The victors had, indeed, carried off some of these cuirasses to serve as culinary utensils, and I myself have seen the Highlanders frying their rations of beef or mutton upon the breast-plates and back-pieces of their discomfited adversaries. But enough remained to make the fortunes of the people of St John, Waterloo, Planchenoit, &c. When I was at La Belle Alliance I bought the cuirass of a common soldier for about six francs; but a very handsome inlaid one, once the property of a French officer of distinction, which was for sale in Brussels, cost me four times the sum. As for the casques, or head-pieces, which by the way are remarkably handsome, they are almost *introuvable*, for the peasants immediately sold them to be beat out for old copper, and the purchasers, needlessly afraid of their being reclaimed, destroyed them as fast as possible.

The eagerness with which we entered into these negotiations, and still more the zeal with which we picked up every trifle we could find upon the field, rather scandalized one of the heroes of the day, who did me the favour to guide me over the field of battle, and who considered the interest I took in things which he was accustomed to see scattered as mere trumpery upon many a field of victory, with a feeling that I believe made him for the moment heartily ashamed of his company. I was obliged to remind him that as he had himself gathered laurels on the same spot, he should have sympathy, or patience at least, with our more humble harvest of peach-stones, filberts, and trinkets. Fortunately the enthusiasm of a visitor,

who went a bow-shot beyond us, by carrying off a brick from the house of La Belle Alliance, with that of a more wholesale amateur, who actually purchased the door of the said mansion for two gold Napoleons, a little mitigated my military friend's censure of our folly, by showing it was possible to exceed it. I own I was myself somewhat curious respecting the use which could be made of the door of La Belle Alliance, unless upon a speculation of cutting it up into trinkets, like Shakspeare's mulberry-tree.

A relic of greater moral interest was given me by a lady, whose father had found it upon the field of battle. It is a manuscript collection of French songs, bearing stains of clay and blood, which probably indicate the fate of the proprietor. One or two of these romances I thought pretty, and have since had an opportunity of having them translated into English, by meeting at Paris with one of our Scottish men of rhyme.

ROMANCE OF DUNOIS.

It was Dunois, the young and brave, was bound for Palestine,
But first he made his orisons before Saint Mary's shrine:
"And grant, immortal Queen of Heaven," was still the soldier's prayer,
"That I may prove the bravest knight, and love the fairest fair."

His oath of honour on the shrine he graved it with his sword,
And follow'd to the Holy Land the banner of his Lord;

Where, faithful to his noble vow, his war-cry fill'd the air,—
" Be honour'd aye the bravest knight, beloved the fairest fair."

They owed the conquest to his arm, and then his liege-lord said,
" The heart that has for honour beat by bliss must be repaid,—
My daughter Isabel and thou shall be a wedded pair,
For thou art bravest of the brave, she fairest of the fair."

And then they bound the holy knot before Saint Mary's shrine,
That makes a paradise on earth if hearts and hands combine;
And every lord and lady bright that were in chapel there,
Cried, " Honour'd be the bravest knight, beloved the fairest fair!"

THE TROUBADOUR.

Glowing with love, on fire for fame,
A Troubadour that hated sorrow,
Beneath his lady's window came,
And thus he sung his last good-morrow:
" My arm it is my country's right,
My heart is in my true-love's bower;
Gaily for love and fame to fight
Befits the gallant Troubadour."

And while he march'd with helm on head
And harp in hand, the descant rung,
As, faithful to his favourite maid,
The minstrel-burden still he sung:
" My arm it is my country's right,
My heart is in my lady's bower;
Resolved for love and fame to fight,
I come, a gallant Troubadour."

Even when the battle-roar was deep,
With dauntless heart he hew'd his way,

Mid splintering lance and falchion-sweep,
And still was heard his warrior-lay;
"My life it is my country's right,
My heart is in my lady's bower;
For love to die, for fame to fight,
Becomes the valiant Troubadour."

Alas! upon the bloody field
He fell beneath the foeman's glaive,
But still, reclining on his shield,
Expiring sung the exulting stave:
"My life it is my country's right,
My heart is in my lady's bower;
For love and fame to fall in fight
Becomes the valiant Troubadour."

The tone of these two romances chimes in not unhappily with the circumstances in which the manuscript was found, although I do not pretend to have discovered the real effusions of a military bard, since the first of them, to my certain knowledge, and I have no doubt the other also, is a common and popular song in France.[1] The following Anacreontic is somewhat of a different kind, and less connected with the tone of feeling excited by the recollection, that the manuscript in which it occurs was the relic of a field of battle:—

It chanced that Cupid on a season,
By Fancy urged, resolved to wed,
But could not settle whether Reason
Or Folly should partake his bed.

What does he then?—Upon my life,
'Twas bad example for a deity—
He takes me Reason for his wife,
And Folly for his hours of gaiety.

[1] Paul has since learned that these two romances were written by no less a personage than the Duchesse de St Leu. [Hortense Beauharnois, Ex-Queen of Holland.—See Sir Walter Scott's *Poetical Works*, where these translations also appear, vol. xi., pp. 304, 305.]

Though thus he dealt in petty treason,
He loved them both in equal measure;
Fidelity was born of Reason,
And Folly brought to bed of Pleasure.

There is another verse of this last song, but so much defaced by stains, and disfigured by indifferent orthography, as to be unintelligible. The little collection contains several other ditties, but rather partaking too much of the freedom of the corps de garde, to be worthy the trouble of transcription or translation.

I have taken more pains respecting these poems than their intrinsic poetical merit can be supposed to deserve, either in the original or the English version; but I cannot divide them from the interest which they have acquired by the place and manner in which they were obtained, and therefore account them more precious than any other of the remains of Waterloo which have fallen into my possession.

Had these relics of minstrelsy, or any thing corresponding to them in tone and spirit, been preserved as actual trophies of the fields of Cressy and Agincourt, how many gay visions of knights and squires and troubadours, and *sirventes* and *lais*, and courts of Love and usages of antique chivalry, would the perusal have excited! Now, and brought close to our own times, they can only be considered as the stock in trade of the master of a regimental band; or at best, we may suppose the compilation to have been the pastime of some young and gay French officer, who, little caring about the real merits of the quarrel in which he was engaged,

considered the war by which the fate of Europe was to be decided only as a natural and animating exchange for the pleasures of Paris. Still the gallantry and levity of the poetry compels us to contrast its destined purpose, to cheer hours of mirth or of leisure, with the place in which the manuscript was found, trampled down in the blood of the writer, and flung away by the hands of the spoilers, who had stripped him on the field of battle. I will not, however, trouble you with any further translations at present; only, to do justice to my gallant Troubadour, I will subjoin the original French in the postscript to this letter. It is a task of some difficulty; for accurate orthography was not a quality of the original writer, and I am myself far from possessing a critical knowledge of the French language, though I have endeavoured to correct his most obvious errors. I am, dear sister, affectionately yours,

PAUL.

POSTSCRIPT.

CHANSON.

Partant pour la Syrie le jeune et beau Dunois,
Alla prier Marie de bénir ses exploits,
" Faites, O Reine immortelle," lui dit-il en partant,
" Que j'aime la plus belle, et sois le plus vaillant."

Il grave sur la pierre le serment de l'honneur
Et va suivre en guerre le Comte et son Seigneur;
Au noble vœu fidèle il crie en combattant,
" Amour à la plus belle, gloire au plus vaillant."

Ou lui doit la victoire—" Dunois," dit son Seigneur,
" Puisque tu fais ma gloire, je ferai ton bonheur,
De ma fille Isabelle sois l'époux à l'instant,
Car elle est la plus belle, et toi le plus vaillant."

A l'autel de Marie ils contractent tous les deux,
Cette union chérie qui seule les rend heureux ;
Chacune Dame à la Chapelle s'écrie en les voyant,
" Amour à la plus belle, honneur au plus vaillant ! "

ROMANCE DE TROUBADOUR.

Brûlant d'amour, en partant pour la guerre,
Le Troubadour, ennemi de chagrin,
Pensoit ainsi à sa jeune bergère,
Tous les matins en chantant ce refrain :
" Mon bras à ma patrie,
Mon cœur pour mon amie,
Mourir gaiment pour la Gloire et l'Amour,
C'est le devoir d'un vaillant Troubadour."

Dans le bivouac le Troubadour fidèle ;
La casque au front, la guitare à la main,
Dans sa delire, à sa jeune bergère,
Chantoit ainsi le joyeux refrain :
" Mon bras à ma patrie,
Mon cœur pour mon amie,
Mourir gaiment pour la Gloire et l'Amour,
C'est le devoir d'un vaillant Troubadour."

Dans les combats deployant son courage,
La courage au cœur, la glaive à la main,
Etoit le même au milieu de carnage,
Chaque matin, en chantant le refrain :
" Mon bras à ma patrie,
Mon cœur à mon amie,
Mourir gaiment pour l'honneur et l'amour,
C'est le devoir d'un vrai Troubadour."

Ce brave, helas ! deployant son courage
Aux ennemis en bravant le destin,

Il respiroit sur la fin son ame,
Nommant sa belle, et chantant le refrain :
" Mon bras à ma patrie,
Mon cœur à mon amie,
Mourir gaîment pour l'honneur et l'amour,
C'est le devoir d'un vrai Troubadour."

CHANSON DE LA FOLIE.

De prendre femme un jour, dit-on,
L'Amour conduit la Fantaisie,
On lui proposa la Raison,
On lui proposa la Folie.—
Quel choix feroit le Dieu fripon,
Chacune d'eux est fort jolie—
Il prit pour femme la Raison,
Et pour maitresse la Folie.

Il les aimoit toutes les deux,
Avec une constance égale,
Mais l'époux vivant au mieux,
Avec la charmante rivale,
Naquit un double rejeton,
De la double galanterie,
L'amant[1] naquit de la Raison
Et le Plaisir de la Folie.

* * * *

[1] *Ita* in MS

LETTER X.

PAUL TO ——— ———, ESQ. OF ———.

Flemish Farms—Brussels—Face of the Country—Forests—Antwerp Dock-yards—Bombardment of Antwerp—Carnot the Governor—Union of Flanders and the Netherlands—Difference of Religion—Antwerp Cathedral—Pictures carried off by the French—Rubens' Descent from the Cross—Painting in the Chapel where he is buried—Wax Figures—Effect of the Union on Dutch Commerce—King of the Netherlands—Belgian troops—Flemish Ballad-singers—Kindness to the British of the People of Brussels—of Antwerp—Reaping-Scythe—Clumsiness of Flemish Furniture and Implements—Apparatus for Shoeing a Horse.

THE obligation which I contracted to write to you, my dear friend, upon subjects in some degree connected with your statistical pursuits, hangs round the neck of my conscience, and encumbers me more than any of the others which I have rashly entered into. But you will forgive the deficiencies of one, who, though fifteen years doomed to be a farmer, has hitherto looked upon his sheep and cows rather as picturesque objects in the pasture, than subjects of profit in the market, and who, by some unaccountable obtuseness of intellect, never could interest himself about his turnips or potatoes,

unless they were placed upon the dinner-table. Could I have got an intelligent Flemish farmer to assist me, I have little doubt that I might have sent you some interesting information from that land of Goshen, where the hand of the labourer is never for an instant folded in inactivity upon his bosom, and where the rich soil repays with ready gratitude the pains bestowed in cultivation. Promptitude and regularity, the soul of all agricultural operations, are here in such active exertion, that before the corn is driven out of the field in which it has been reaped, the plough is at work upon the stubble, leaving only the ridges occupied by the shocks. The fertility of the soil is something unequalled, even in our best carse lands, being generally a deep and inexhaustible mould, as favourable for forest-trees as for cultivation. Cheapness is the natural companion of plenty; and I should suppose that Brussels, considered as a capital, where every luxury can be commanded, is at present one of the economical places of residence in Europe. I began a brief computation, from which it appeared, that I might support myself with those comforts or luxuries which habit has rendered necessary to me, maintaining at the same time decent hospitality, and a respectable appearance, for about the sum of direct taxes which I pay to the public in Scotland. But ere I had time to grumble at my lot, came the comfortable recollection, that my humble home in the north is belted in by the broad sea, and divided from all the convulsions that have threatened the continent, that no contending armies have decided the fate of the world within ten miles

of my dwelling, and that the sound of cannon never broke my rest, unless as an early *feu-de-joie*. These, with the various circumstances of safety and freedom connected with them, and arising out of them, are reasons more than sufficient for determining my preference in favour of my own homely home.

But for such as have better reasons than mere economy for choosing a short residence abroad, Brussels possesses great attractions. The English society there, so far as I saw it, is of the very first order, and I understand that of the principal families of the Netherlands is accessible and pleasant. This, however, is wandering from the promised topics—*revenons à nos moutons*.

The farm-houses and cottages in the Netherlands have an air of ease and comfort corresponding with the healthy and contented air of their inhabitants. That active industry, which eradicates every weed, prevents the appearance of waste and disorder, and turns every little patch of garden or orchard-ground to active profit, is nowhere seen to more advantage than in the Netherlands; and the Flemish painters copied from nature when they represented the groups of trees and thickets in which their cottages are usually embosomed. These thickets, and the woods of a larger scale, which are numerous and extensive, supply the inhabitants with fuel, though there are also coal-mines wrought to considerable extent near Charleroi. The woods are chiefly of beech, but varied with birches, oaks, and other trees. The oaks, in particular, seem to find this a favourite soil, and are to be seen sprouting

freely in situations where the surface appears a light and loose sand. In the lower strata, no doubt, they find a clay soil better adapted to their nourishment.

The forests of Flanders were formerly of a more valuable description than at present, for the trees fit for ship-timber have been in a great measure cut down by Bonaparte's orders, in his eager desire to create a navy at Antwerp. Nothing could better mark the immensity of his projects, and the extensive means which he had combined for their execution, than the magnificent dock-yards which he created in that city. The huge blocks of hewn stone, of the most beautiful grey colour, and closest grain, each weighing from two to four tons, which were employed in facing the large and deep basins which he constructed, were brought by water from the quarries of Charleroi, at the distance of sixty miles and upwards. The fortifications also, which Bonaparte added to those of the city, were of the most formidable description. Nevertheless the British thunders reached his vessels even in their well-defended dock-yards, as was testified by several of them having been sunk during the bombardment by Sir Thomas Graham, of which the masts yet remain visible above water. The people of Antwerp did not speak with much respect of the talents of Carnot, (their governor during the siege,) considered as an engineer, although we have often heard them mentioned with applause in England. They pointed out the remains of a small fascine battery, which was said to be misplaced, and never to have done any execution, as

the only offensive preparation made by order of this celebrated mathematician. In other respects the citizens were agreeably deceived in Carnot, whose appointment to the government of the city was regarded with the greatest apprehensions by the inhabitants, who remembered that he had been the minister and instrument of Robespierre. He gave them, however, no reason to complain of him, and the necessary measures which he adopted of destroying such parts of the suburbs as interfered with the fire of the batteries, and the defence of the place, were carried into execution with as much gentleness and moderation as the inhabitants could have expected. The town itself, being studiously spared by the clemency of the besieging general, suffered but little from the British fire, though some houses were ruined by the bombs, and particularly the *Douane*, or French custom-house, whose occupants had so long vexed the Flemings by their extortion, that its destruction was regarded by them with great joy.

Belgium, or Flanders, has of late acquired a new political existence, as a principal part of the kingdom of the Netherlands. I am no friend, in general, to the modern political legerdemain, which transfers cities and districts from one state to another, substituting the "natural boundaries," (a phrase invented by the French to justify their own usurpations,) by assuming a river or a chain of mountains, or some other geographical line of demarcation, instead of the moral limits which have been drawn, by habits of faith and loyalty to a particular sovereign or form of government, by agreement in political and

religious opinions, and by resemblance of language and manners; limits traced at first perhaps by the influence of chance, but which have been rendered sacred and indelible by long course of time and the habits which it has gradually fostered. *Arrondissements*, therefore, Indemnities, and all the other terms of modern date, under sanction of which cities and districts, and even kingdoms, have been passed from one government to another, as the property of lands and stock is transferred by a bargain between private parties, have been generally found to fail in their principal object. Either a general indifference to the form of government and its purposes, has been engendered in those whom superior force has thus rendered the sport of circumstances; or, where the minds of the population are of a higher and more vigorous order, the forced transference has only served to increase their affection to the country from which they have been torn, and their hatred against that to which they are subjected. The alienation of the Tyrol from Austria may be quoted as an example of the latter effect; and it is certain, that this iniquitous habit of transferring allegiance in the gross from one state to another, without consulting either the wishes or the prejudices of those from whom it is claimed, has had the former consequences of promoting a declension of public spirit among the smaller districts of Germany. Upon the map, indeed, the new acquisitions are traced with the same colour which distinguishes the original dominions of the state to which they are attached, and in the accompanying gazetteer, we read that such a

city with its liberties, containing so many thousand souls, forms now a part of the population of such a kingdom: But can this be seriously supposed (at least until the lapse of centuries) to convey to the subjects, thus transferred, that love and affection to their new dynasty of rulers, that reverence for the institutions in church and state, those wholesome and honest prejudices in favour of the political society to which we belong, which go so far in forming the love of our native country? "Care I for the limbs, the thewes, the sinews of a man—Give me the spirit!"—and when the stipulations of a treaty, or the decrees of a conqueror, can transfer with the lands and houses the love, faith, and attachment of the inhabitants, I will believe that such *arrondissements* make a wholesome and useful part of the state to which they are assigned. Until then the attempt seems much like that of a charlatan who should essay to ingraft, as a useful and serviceable limb, upon the person of one patient, the arm or leg which he has just amputated from another.

But though it seems in general sound and good doctrine, to beware of removing ancient landmarks, and although the great misfortunes of Europe may be perhaps traced to the partition of Poland, in which this attempt was first made upon the footing of open violence, yet the union between the Low Countries and the States of Holland must be admitted to form a grand exception to the general rule. It is, indeed, rather a restoration of the natural union which subsisted before the time of Philip the Second, than a new-modelled arrange-

ment of territory; the unsettled situation of Flanders, in particular, having long been such as to make it the common and ordinary stage, upon which all the prize-fighters of Europe decided their quarrels. To a people too often abandoned to the subaltern oppression of governors sent from their foreign masters, it is no small boon to be placed under a mild and mitigated monarchy, and united with a nation whose customs, habits, and language, are so similar to their own. Still, however, such is the influence of the separate feelings and opinions acquired during the lapse of two centuries, that many prejudices remain to be smoothed away, and much jealousy to be allayed, and soothed, before the good influence of the union can be completely felt.

The first and most irritating cause of apprehension is the difference of religion. The Flemings are very zealous, and very ignorant Catholics, over whom their clergy have a proportional power. The King's declared purpose of toleration has greatly alarmed this powerful body, and the nerve which has thus been touched has not failed to vibrate through the whole body politic. The Bishop of Ghent, formerly a great adherent and ally of Bonaparte, has found his conscience alarmingly twinged by so ominous a declaration on the part of a Calvinistic monarch, and has already made his remonstrance against this part of the proposed constitution in a pastoral letter, which is couched in very determined language.[1] But the present royal

1 I take this opportunity to announce the correction of a very gross error in the first edition of these Letters, where

family are too surely seated, and the times, it may be hoped, too liberal, for such fulminations to interfere with the progress of toleration. Meanwhile the king neglects nothing that fairly can be done

the name of the Bishop of Liege had, through misinformation, been inserted for that of the Bishop of Ghent. The extent of this mistake, which I deeply regret, will be best understood by the following extract from a letter, in which it is pointed out and corrected. The authority of the writer is beyond dispute, and Paul readily admits the inaccuracy of his notes, though taken upon the spot.

"The Bishop of Liege was never an adherent or ally of Bonaparte. On the contrary, driven from his principality or bishopric, (for the See of Liege was formerly both,) he took refuge at Ratisbone, where his residence has, I believe, ever been, and where he has never ceased to enjoy the respect of those who were most opposed to the views of the usurper. So far from his conscience having been alarmingly twinged by the king's proposed toleration, that, recommended by his majesty to the Archbishopric of Malines in the room of the Abbé de Pradt, he repaired to Brussels when the constitution was proposed, and acted there, at a very critical moment, as the most strenuous supporter of that very toleration which he is accused so erroneously as having opposed. You, who were present with me at Brussels when the constitution of the Low Countries was proposed and adopted, were a personal witness of the laudable conduct of this worthy prelate, and can speak of it as it deserves. It would have been impossible for the Bishop of Liege to have issued a pastoral letter, not only of the nature in question, but of any kind whatever; because, though still styled Bishop, he has in effect no diocese, that of Liege having been abolished during the French occupancy. I should conceive the prelate whose name ought to have been cited in this part of the work, to be the Bishop of Ghent, to whom all that has thus been erroneously attributed to the Prince-Bishop of Liege will exactly apply, except that I am not aware of his having, as stated in the 238d page, had *brethren* in his intolerance, at least episcopal brethren, the Bishop of Tournay having been the only bishop of the Netherlands who adopted a similar course of opposition."

to conciliate his new Catholic subjects. He has recently pledged himself to use his utmost exertions to recover from the possession of the French the pictures which they carried off from various churches in the Netherlands, and particularly from Brussels and Antwerp. Among the last, was the chef-d'œuvre of Rubens, the Descent from the Cross, which, with two corresponding pictures relative to the same subject, once hung above the high altar in the magnificent church at Antwerp, where the compartments, which they once filled, remain still vacant to remind the citizens of their loss. All the other ornaments of that church, as well as of the cathedral, shared the fate of this masterpiece, excepting only a painting which Rubens executed to decorate the chapel in which he himself lies buried; and which an unusual feeling of respect and propriety prevented the spoilers from tearing away from his tomb. The composition of the picture is something curious; for under the representation of a Holy Family, and various characters of the New Testament, the artist has painted his grandfather, his father, his three wives, and his mistress, the *last* in the character of the Virgin Mary, to whom the others are rendering homage. He has also introduced his own portrait, a noble martial figure, dressed in armour, and in the act of unfurling a banner. Whatever may be thought of the decorum of such a picture painted for such a place, the beauty of the execution cannot be sufficiently admired. While the English traveller is called upon for once to acknowledge the moderation of the French, who have left at least one mo-

nument of art in the place to which it was most appropriate, he will probably wish they had carried off with them the trash of wax figures, which, to the disgrace of good taste and common sense, are still the objects of popular adoration. Abstracted from all polemics, one can easily conceive that the sight of an interesting painting, representing to our material organs the portrait of a saint, or an affecting scene of Scripture, may not only be an appropriate ornament in the temple of worship, but, like church-music, may have its effect in fixing the attention, and aiding the devotion of the congregation. It may be also easily understood, and readily forgiven, that when kneeling before the very altar to which our ancestors in trouble resorted for comfort, we may be gradually led to annex a superstitious reverence to the place itself: But when, in the midst of such a cathedral as that of Antwerp, one of the grandest pieces of Gothic architecture which Europe can show,—when among the long-drawn aisles and lofty arches, which seem almost the work of demi-gods, so much does the art and toil bestowed surpass what modern times can present,—when, in the midst of such a scene, we find a wax figure of the Virgin, painted, patched, frizzled, and powdered; with a tarnished satin gown, (the skirt held up by two cherubs,) paste earrings and necklace, differing in no respect, but in size, from the most paltry doll that ever was sold in a toy-shop; and observe this incongruous and ridiculous *swamy* the object of fervid and zealous adoration from the votaries who are kneeling before it, we see the idolatry of the

Romish Church in a point of view disgusting and humiliating as that of ancient Egypt, and cease to wonder at the obstinacy of the prelate aforesaid, and that part of the priesthood, who fear the light which universal toleration would doubtless throw upon the benighted worship of their great Diana. In the meanwhile the promise of the king to procure restoration of the pictures, is received by most of the Flemings as a pledge, that the religion which he himself professes, will not prevent his interesting himself in that of the Catholics; and I think there can be little doubt that, under the gradual influence of time and example, the grosser points of superstition will be tacitly abandoned here, as in other Catholic countries.

The Dutch have a more worldly subject of jealousy in the state of their commerce, which cannot but be materially affected by the opening of the Scheldt, whenever that desirable event shall have taken place, and also by the principal residence of the government being changed from the Hague to Brussels. But they are a reflecting people, and are already aware that the operation of both these changes will be slow and gradual; for commerce is not at once transferred from the channels in which it has long flowed; and for some time, at least, family recollections and attachments will make the royal family frequent residents in Holland, notwithstanding the charms of the palace of Lacken. In the meanwhile the Dutch gain the inestimable advantage of having the battle turned from their gates, and of enjoying the protec-

tion of a strong barrier placed at a distance from their own frontier.—blessings of themselves sufficient to compensate the inconvenience which they may for a time sustain, until they transfer their capital and industry to the new channels offered for them by the union.

Nothing could have happened so fortunate for the popularity of the house of Orange as the active and energetic character of the hereditary prince. His whole behaviour during the actions of Quatre Bras and Waterloo, and the wound which (it may be almost said fortunately) he received upon the latter occasion, have already formed the strongest bond of union between his family and their new subjects, long unaccustomed to have sovereigns who could lead them to battle, and shed their blood in the national defence. The military force, which he is at this moment perpetually increasing, is of a respectable description; for, though some of the Belgian troops behaved ill during the late brief campaign, there were other corps, and particularly infantry and artillery, both Dutch and Flemings, whose firmness and discipline equalled those of any regiments in the field. The *braves Belges* are naturally proud of the military glory they have acquired, as well as of the prince who led them on. In every corner of Brussels there were ballad-singers bellowing out songs in praise of the prince and his followers. I, who am a collector of popular effusions, did not fail to purchase specimens of the Flemish minstrelsy, in which, by the way, there is no more mention of the Duke of

Wellington, or of John Bull, than if John Bull and his illustrious general had had nothing to do with the battle of Waterloo.

This little omission of the Flemish bards proceeds, however, from no disinclination to the Duke or to England. On the contrary, our wounded received during their illness, and are yet experien cing during their convalescence, the most affecting marks of kindness and attention from the inhabitants of Brussels. These acts of friendship towards their allies were not suspended (as will sometimes happen in this world) until the chance of war had decided in favour of the English. Even on the 17th, when the defeat of Blucher, and the retreat of the Duke of Wellington, authorized them to entertain the most gloomy apprehensions for their own safety, as well as to fear the vengeance of the French for any partiality they might show towards their enemies, the kind citizens of Brussels were not deterred from the exercise of kindness and hospitality. They were seen meeting the wounded with refreshments; some seeking for those soldiers who had been quartered in their houses, others bestowing their care on the first disabled sufferer they met with, carrying him to their home, and nursing him like a child of the family, at all the cost, trouble, and risk, with which their hospitality might be attended. The people of Antwerp, to which city were transferred upon the 17th and 18th most of those who had been wounded at Quatre Bras, were equally zealous in the task of the good Samaritan. Many of our poor

fellows told me, that they must have perished but for the attention of these kind Flemings, whose

"Entire affection scorned nicer hands,"

since many of the highest and most respectable classes threw pride and delicacy aside to minister to the wants of the sufferers. On their part, the Flemings were often compelled to admire the endurance and hardihood of their patients. "Your countrymen," said a lady to me, who spoke our language well, "are made of iron, and not of flesh and blood. I saw a wounded Highlander stagger along the street, supporting himself by the rails, and said to him, I am afraid you are severely hurt. 'I was born in Lochaber,' answered the poor fellow, 'and I do not care for a wound;' but ere I could complete my offer of shelter and assistance, he sunk down at my feet a dying man." In one house in Brussels, occupied by a respectable manufacturer and his two sisters, thirty wounded soldiers were received, nursed, fed, and watched, the only labour of the medical attendants being to prevent their hosts from giving the patients wine, and more nourishing food than suited their situation. We may hope the reciprocal benefits of defence and of hospitality will be long remembered, forming a kindly connexion between England and a country, which, of all others, may be most properly termed her natural ally.

I have again wandered from agriculture into olitics and military affairs, but I have little to add hich properly belongs to your department, since

I have no doubt that you have already sate in judgment upon the Flemish plough, rake, and hay-fork, presented to the Highland Society by one of its most active members. The most remarkable implement of agriculture which fell under my observation was a sort of hooked stick, which the reaper holds in his left hand, and uses to collect and lay the corn as he cuts it with a short scythe. The operation is very speedy, for one person engaged in it can keep two or three constantly employed in binding the sheafs. But I suppose it would only answer where the ground is level and free from stones.

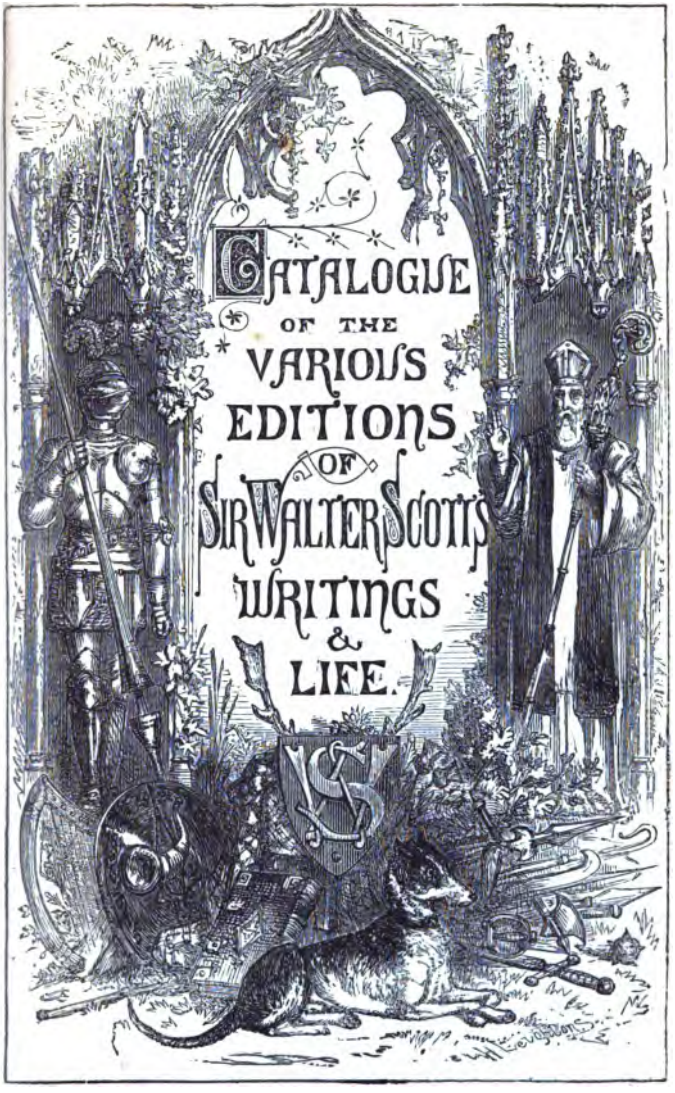
The furniture of the Flemings, and, generally speaking, their implements of labour, &c., have a curious correspondence with what we have been accustomed to consider as their national character; being strong and solid, but clumsy and inelegant, and having a great deal more substance employed in constructing them than seems at all necessary. Thus the lever of an ordinary draw-well is generally one long tree; and their waggons and barges are as huge and heavy as the horses which draw them. The same cumbrous solidity which distinguishes the female figures of Rubens, may be traced in the domestic implements and contrivances of his countrymen. None would have entertained you more than the apparatus provided for securing a horse while in the act of being shod, a case in which our Vulcans trust to an ordinary halter and their own address. But a Flemish horse is immured within a wooden erection of about his own

size, having a solid roof, supported by four massive posts, such as a British carpenter would use to erect a harbour-crane. The animal's head is fastened between two of these huge columns with as many chains and cords as might have served to bind Baron Trenck; and the foot which is to be shod is secured in a pair of stocks, which extend between two of the upright beams. This is hardly worth writing, though ridiculous to look at; but there is something, as Anstey says, "so clumsy and clunch" in the massive strength of the apparatus, in the very unnecessary extent of the precaution, and in the waste of time, labour, and materials, that it may be selected as an indication of a national character, displaying itself in the most ordinary and trifling particulars.

Adieu, my dear friend; I am sorry I can send you no more curious information on your favourite subject. But it would be unnecessary to one who is skilled in all the modern arts of burning without fire, and feeding without pasture; and who requires no receipts from Holland to teach him how to lay on so much fat upon a bullock or a pig, as will make the flesh totally unfit for eating. Yours affectionately,

PAUL.

END OF PART I



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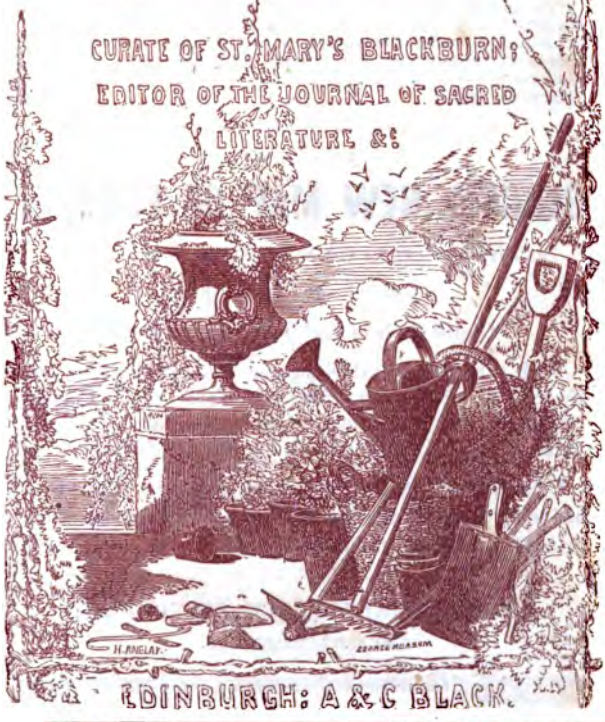

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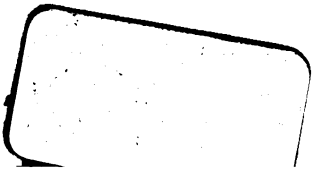

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